

Appendix R

NEPA Concurrence Points

Appendix R Table of Contents

NEPA CONCURRENCE POINT MATERIALS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Comments on the Purpose and Need

April 3, 2013 Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology Letter to FHWA.....	R-1
April 9, 2013 Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance Letter to IDOT	R-3
April 10, 2013 Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning Letter to IDOT	R-5
April 11, 2013 Indiana Department of Environmental Management E-mail to FHWA	R-7
April 15, 2013 Center for Neighborhood Technology, Environmental Law and Policy Center, Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance, Openlands, Sierra Club, Illinois Chapter, The Nature Conservancy, The Wetlands Initiative, Prairie Rivers Network, Illinois Audubon Society, and Midewin Heritage Association joint Letter to IDOT	R-8
April 17, 2013 Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Fish and Wildlife Letter to FHWA.....	R-12
April 22, 2013 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Letter to FHWA	R-13
April 29, 2013 Illinois Department of Natural Resources E-Mail to FHWA	R-14
April 30, 2013 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Letter to FHWA	R-15
June 18, 2013 Kankakee County Board Letter to IDOT	R-17
Response (October 8, 2013).....	R-18

Comments on the Alternatives to be Carried Forward Technical Memorandum

September 13, 2013 City of Joliet Letter to IDOT.....	R-19
Response (October 8, 2013).....	R-20
September 26, 2013 United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Letter to IDOT.....	R-21
September 27, 2013 Environmental Law and Policy Center, Openlands, and Sierra Club, Illinois Chapter Joint Letter	R-37
October 4, 2013 Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology Letter to FHWA.....	R-41
October 9, 2013 Indiana Department of Environmental Management E-mail to FHWA.....	R-43
Response (November 21, 2013).....	R-45
October 21, 2013 Indiana Department of Natural Resources Environmental Unit, Division of Fish and Wildlife Letter to FHWA.....	R-46
Response (November 21, 2013).....	R-47
October 21, 2013 United States Army Corps of Engineers E-mail to FHWA	R-51
Response (December 20, 2013).....	R-54
October 22, 2013 Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology Letter to FHWA	R-56
October 23, 2013 NEPA/404 Merger Meeting.....	R-59

Presentation	R-57
Sign In Sheet	R-77
Summary	R-78



Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology • 402 W. Washington Street, W274 • Indianapolis, IN 46204-2739
Phone 317-232-1646 • Fax 317-232-0693 • dhpa@dnr.IN.gov



April 3, 2013

Matt Fuller
Environmental Programs Engineer
Illinois Division Office
Federal Highway Administration
3250 Executive Park Drive
Springfield, Illinois 62563

Federal Agency: Federal Highway Administration ("FHWA")

Re: "DRAFT Purpose and Need Statement: Illiana Corridor Tier Two Environmental Impact Statement" (February 12, 2013) (INDOT Des. No. 1006456; DHPA No. 11913)

Dear Mr. Fuller:

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the staff of the Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer ("Indiana SHPO") has reviewed the aforementioned "DRAFT Purpose and Need Statement," which we received as an attachment to your March 15, 2013, e-mail message, in preparation for the April 16, 2013, NEPA-404 Merger Meeting regarding concurrence on the purpose and need for Tier Two of the Illiana Corridor, which might have impacts in Lake County, Indiana, and in Kankakee and Will counties, Illinois.

Your March 15 e-mail message stated, in reference to the Illinois NEPA-404 merger agreement, that "concurrence is confirmation by an agency that (1) the information to date is sufficient for this stage [of project development], and (2) the project may proceed to the next stage of project development." Your message also quoted the following pertinent statement from the merger agreement: "*Concurrence does not imply an agency has endorsed the project or released its obligation to determine if the project meets statutory review criteria.*"

Guided by that advice on what concurrence does and does not represent and viewing the February 12 "Draft Purpose and Need Statement" from a historical and archaeological preservation perspective, the Indiana SHPO concurs with the purpose and need for Tier Two, as described in the February 12 document.

If you have questions about issues pertaining to above-ground properties, such as buildings or structures, in Indiana, then please contact John Carr at (317) 233-1949 or jcarr@dnr.IN.gov. Questions about archaeological issues in Indiana should be directed to Dr. Rick Jones at (317) 233-0953 or rjones@dnr.IN.gov. In future correspondence regarding this project, please refer to DHPA No. 11913. Please address written correspondence on Illiana Corridor Tier Two to Chad W. Slider, Assistant Director for Environmental Review, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 402 West Washington Street, Room W274, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204.

Very truly yours,

Ron McAhron
Deputy Director
Indiana Department of Natural Resources

RM:JLC:jlc

emc: Matt Fuller, Federal Highway Administration, Illinois Division
Joyce Newland, Federal Highway Administration, Indiana Division
James A. Earl, II, P.E., Indiana Department of Transportation
John Fortmann, Illinois Department of Transportation
Steven Schilke, P.E., Illiana Project Manager
Kesti Susinskas, P.E., IDOT PMC Project Manager
Katie Kukielka, P.E., IDOT PMC Project Manager
Anne Haaker, Illinois Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Laura Hilden, Indiana Department of Transportation
Patrick Carpenter, Indiana Department of Transportation
Shaun Miller, Indiana Department of Transportation
Anuradha Kumar, Indiana Department of Transportation
Susan Branigin, Indiana Department of Transportation
Matt Coon, Ph.D., Indiana Department of Transportation
Melany Prather, Indiana Department of Transportation
Matt Buffington, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife
Richard Rampone, P.E., Parsons Brinckerhoff
Aimee Paquin, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Steve Ott, Parsons Brinckerhoff

Illiana Corridor - Comments

To: Pete Harmet
c/o Kesti Susinskas
Illinois DOT
Region One / District 1
201 W. Center Court
Schaumburg, IL 60196
Fax: 847-705-4126

Date: April 9, 2013

From: Jerry Heinrich, President and Representative
Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance
(a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization)
P.O. Box 2026
Joliet, Illinois 60434

Comment Regarding: Purpose and Needs Statement

As currently proposed, alternative Route B3 fails to address a number of primary "issues and concerns" that were originally identified and determined to be central to determining "**purpose and need**".

1. As proposed, Illiana Alternative Route B3 will do little to nothing to address or mitigate intermodal freight and truck traffic associated with the two, large CenterPoint Intermodal facilities and associated, nearby warehouses. Construction of the B3 alternative ensures that CenterPoint and related traffic will continue to impact and use Route 53 north to I-80, and Route 53 south to intersection with a proposed Illiana Expressway. Instead of addressing and alleviating truck traffic, the B3 alternative will very likely make an already bad situation even worse. Elwood, Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, DesPlaines Conservation Area, the Kankakee River, and Wilmington will be impacted by more (not less) rumbling truck traffic, safety concerns, noise, light pollution, odor...
2. The "Purpose and Need" statement provides that a primary justification for building an Illiana Expressway is to "**alleviated local congestion and improve local system mobility**". Based on traffic projections provided by Illiana Planners, it is most probable that the Illiana Expressway will **NOT** alleviate local congestion and will **NOT** improve local system mobility at the west end of the Study Area, i.e. that at the west end of the study area, the Illiana Expressway will actually do more harm than good.

Before the Illiana is allowed to move forward, potential impacts on existing peripheral highways NEED to be determined and plans for mitigation made before the Illiana is allowed to move forward.

Thank you. Jerry Heinrich, President
Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance
1770 S. Vista Drive
Wilmington, Illinois, 60481
815-476-6171
g.heinrich@sbcglobal.net



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

233 South Wacker Drive
Suite 800
Chicago, IL 60606
312-454-0400
www.cmap.illinois.gov

April 10, 2013

Via e-mail: steven.schilke@illinois.gov
and first class, U.S. Mail

Mr. Steve Schilke
Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)
Region One/District 1
201 West Center Court
Schaumburg, Illinois 60196

Dear Mr. Schilke:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Purpose and Need (P&N) Statement and draft Scoping Document for the Tier II Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Illiana Expressway.

Two of the three bulleted points in the P&N Statement depend heavily on projections of local population and traffic. As we have noted on numerous occasions during your process, the demographic forecasts that the Illiana study team is using are inconsistent with the region's metropolitan transportation plan GO TO 2040. While the regional "control totals" may be the same, GO TO 2040 forecasts for the study area are different from those prepared by the Illiana team. Please clarify on page 1-6 that the Illiana team's forecasts for the study area are, in fact, different from the GO TO 2040 forecasts.

Furthermore, the P&N Statement suggests that "the northern portion of the South Sub-Region [i.e., southern Cook and northern Will Counties in Illinois] that includes I-80 is fully developed with limited infill opportunities," with the apparent implication that development should occur farther to the south. As part of GO TO 2040, CMAP produced analysis of infill potential in the region, finding that infill opportunities are widespread in southern Cook and northern Will Counties. GO TO 2040 also articulated a policy goal to accommodate a significant amount of the region's projected population through infill. Please refer to pages 68-69 in the full version of GO TO 2040. We will be happy to provide this information to use in the Illiana study.

The P&N Statement also notes that the Tier One Final EIS system performance analysis "assumes the implementation of committed projects and those financially constrained major transportation projects included in the adopted

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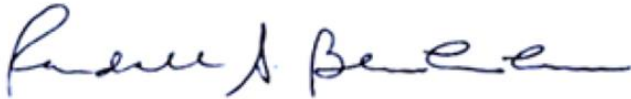
Mr. Steve Schilke
April 10, 2013
Page 2

long-range transportation plans.” Our review with the consultant showed that projects which did not meet these criteria were included in the analysis. We hope that Tier II will provide an opportunity to review the included projects and to ensure that they are consistent with the regional transportation planning process.

Finally, we agree there is a strong case for addressing growth in long-distance truck traffic throughout the region, as noted in the purpose statement's last point. GO TO 2040 also described the need for facilities to accommodate freight movement by truck. We encourage you to more thoroughly examine current and forecasted freight traffic based on GO TO 2040 forecasts to determine if this potential facility should be focused on improving freight movement.

Your team has put significant work into a complex project, and we appreciate those efforts. The Illiana study team's approach needs to respect the regional planning process that led to GO TO 2040. We hope our remarks will be used to further improve the Purpose and Need Statement and the Draft Scoping Document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Randall S. Blankenhorn".

Randall S. Blankenhorn
Executive Director

TG:RSB/stk

cc: John Donovan, FHWA
Roger Claar, Mayor of Bolingbrook, CMAP Board Member

From: [Cate, Meredith](#)
To: [Cate, Meredith](#)
Subject: FW: NEPA/404 P&N Illiana Concurrence - Video Conference on 4/16, 10.06.8, 10.14.1
Date: Thursday, April 11, 2013 11:37:22 AM

From: CLARK METTLER, MARTHA [<mailto:MCLARK@idem.IN.gov>]
Sent: Thursday, April 11, 2013 7:38 AM
To: Newland, Joyce (FHWA); Fuller, Matt (FHWA)
Cc: RANDOLPH, JASON
Subject: RE: NEPA/404 P&N Illiana Concurrence - Video Conference on 4/16

Neither Jason nor I will be attending for IDEM. IDEM concurs with the Tier Two purpose and need provided.

Martha Clark Mettler
Deputy Assistant Commissioner
Office of Water Quality
Indiana Department of Environmental Management
100 North Senate Avenue
MC 65-40 IGCN 1255
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2251
317-232-8402

April 15, 2013

Ms. Katie L. Kukielka, P.E.
Illinois Department of Transportation - District 1
201 West Center Court
Schaumburg, IL 60196-1096

RE: **Joint Comments on the Illiana Expressway Tier Two Draft Purpose and Need Statement**

Dear Ms. Kukielka:

The Draft Purpose and Need Statement prepared by the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Indiana Department of Transportation (collectively, “the agencies”) for the Illiana Expressway’s Tier 2 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) contains the same fundamental flaws as the Tier 1 EIS. Unfortunately, the agencies have continued to disregard compelling concerns regarding the need for the proposed Illiana Expressway identified by, among many others, the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) primarily responsible for transportation policy in the study area. As a result, the agencies continue to study an environmentally destructive corridor that has been designed to solve a traffic problem that does not exist. Our organizations call on the agencies to reopen the Tier 1 study process to evaluate alternatives that respond to real, existing transportation needs with solutions that are far less speculative and costly than the agencies’ proposed multi-billion-dollar tollway in the B3 corridor.

Just as in the Tier 1 study process, the agencies have constructed the Tier 2 purpose and need statement on an assumption of explosive growth at the very edges of the Chicago metropolitan area. In doing so, the agencies again have failed to reasonably characterize the region’s transportation needs. Without justification, the agencies have refused to consider the most recent regional population and employment forecasts prepared by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC). Instead, the agencies have relied entirely on a forecast prepared by a private consultant who has no hand in regional transportation planning.

As a result, the MPOs and the agencies have put forward forecasts for 2040 that reflect two very different views of the future. The MPOs’ official forecasts reflect extensive plans to implement regional policies to encourage smart, sustainable growth in more densely populated areas. The plans acknowledge and value agricultural business. In GO TO 2040, CMAP recognized that “[a]bundant natural areas make our seven-county region a more desirable place to live and work, and [that] without green spaces, our economic competitiveness would suffer.” GO TO 2040 Short Plan, at 41. CMAP recommends preserving and protecting the vast majority of the Prairie Parklands macrosite within the Chicago Wilderness Green Infrastructure Vision as part of our natural heritage. GO TO 2040 Full-Length Plan, at 128, Figure 23.

The agencies’ “market-based” forecast for 2040, on the other hand, simply reflects outdated assumptions of “business as usual”—that historic trends of suburban sprawl (in some areas) will continue all around the Illiana study area for the next three decades—despite the MPOs’ ongoing implementation of policies that will discourage such development and instead encourage infill of existing communities. The agencies’ unreasonable rejection of the MPO forecasts illegitimately usurps

the role of regional planning from the MPOs and disregards the effect that their policy decisions will have on growth trends.

Because they are based in two very different visions of the future, the two sets of forecasts yield very different pictures of regional population and employment growth. For example, for the Indiana portion of the study area, NIRPC had forecast a population growth of 19.8%, and employment growth of 27.9%, by 2040. The agencies' analysis is based on projected growth almost an order of magnitude larger: a 176% increase in population and a 225% increase in employment. The agencies' overly-aggressive projections of growth were made throughout the entire Illiana study area, departing dramatically from the work of the MPOs. See Al Chalabi Group, Ltd., *Historic and Forecasted Growth of Employment and Population in the Extended Region of Chicago, Market-Driven versus Policy-Based Socio-Economic Forecasts (2010-2040), No-Build Illiana Expressway Scenario* (Feb. 2012), at 24-30. For the two portions of Will County studied as part of the Illiana corridor, the agencies' consultant acknowledged that its "Market-Driven" forecasts were "considerably higher than those of CMAP." *Id.* at 24-25. The agencies' consultant further acknowledged that the areas both had grown "slowly and modestly," but then implausibly contended that they were now at "take-off." *Id.*

The determination that the Illiana Study Area is now ready for "take-off" is problematic, in part, because it relies on the construction of the Illiana Expressway itself. Despite captioning its report as a "no-build" scenario, the consultant that prepared the agencies' population and employment forecasts refers, on multiple occasions, to the potential construction of "the Illiana Expressway" as a justification for explosive population growth in Will and Lake Counties. See, e.g., *id.* at A-8. In other words, the "Illiana Expressway" was used to justify population forecasts that now are used to justify the Illiana Expressway. This circular logic is faulty, and the agencies' rejection of the MPOs' forecasts unwarranted.

The agencies' over-statement of expected population and employment growth in the Illiana study area—and most particularly the areas near the proposed B3 corridor—inflicts the entire Draft Purpose and Need Statement. According to the Statement, the foremost need for the proposed tollway is population and employment growth: "Existing and future travel demand in the Region is driven by growth in population, employment, and commuter traffic . . ." Draft Purpose and Need Statement at 1-8. The agencies' population and employment forecasts—and the traffic forecasts that were based on them—also are cited more specifically as demonstrating the needs to "increase regional mobility," *id.* at 1-10—1-13, and "alleviate local system congestion," *id.* at 1-14—1-20.

Any Purpose and Need Statement for the Illiana corridor must include a discussion of the MPOs' 2040 population and employment forecasts, and any transportation needs associated with them. However, the Draft Purpose and Need Statement's only reference to the MPOs' role in the forecasting process is that "[t]he project study team will continue to coordinate with the regional planning agencies on the forecasts used for the project . . ." *Id.* at 1-8. This statement is both misleading and unclear. It omits the fact that the agencies have refused, over the objections of the MPOs, to consider the MPOs' forecasts. The agencies have not coordinated their forecasts with those of the MPOs; rather, the agencies simply have rejected them. The agencies should clarify the meaning of this statement. If the agencies intend to adjust their forecasts to reflect the more realistic MPO forecasts, then both this draft purpose and need statement and the entire Tier 1 EIS will need to be modified accordingly.

Our organizations again ask the agencies to reconsider their attempt to push through their preferred B3 corridor. This corridor does not make sense from either a transportation planning or financial standpoint. Simply put, there is no reasonable basis for the agencies' conclusion that the Illiana study

area—particularly the southern area near the B3 corridor, located far south of denser northern population centers—will experience the explosive population growth on which the B3 alternative has been justified. Without this high level of growth, there is no need for a tollway in the far-south B3 corridor. To the contrary, construction of the proposed tollway would ignore needs in other parts of the region, and result in extensive damage to rare and precious natural resources in the Prairie Parklands macrosite.

For the reasons expressed above and in our earlier comments during the Tier 1 process, we respectfully request IDOT and INDOT to drop consideration of the B3 corridor, and instead consider how local transportation alternatives might better resolve potential traffic congestion in this part of the region. We strongly urge IDOT and INDOT to evaluate alternatives that improve our existing network of roads and invest in more sustainable and livable transportation solutions for our region.

Sincerely,

CENTER FOR NEIGHBORHOOD TECHNOLOGY	ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND POLICY CENTER
 Jacky Grimshaw Vice President of Transportation Policy Center for Neighborhood Technology 2125 W. North Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60647 jacky@cnt.org 773.269.4033	 Andrew Armstrong Staff Attorney Environmental Law and Policy Center 35 East Wacker Drive, Suite 1600 Chicago, IL 60601 aarmstrong@elpc.org 312.751.3738
MIDWIN TALLGRASS PRAIRIE ALLIANCE	OPENLANDS
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April 17, 2013

Matt Fuller
Environmental Programs Engineer
Federal Highway Administration - Illinois Division Office
3250 Executive Park Drive
Springfield, IL 62563

Re: Draft Purpose and Need Statement: Illiana Corridor Tier Two Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Fuller:

This letter is in response to the Tier Two "Draft Purpose and Need Statement," which was received as an attachment to your March 15, 2013, email. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has reviewed this draft document as part of the NEPA review for the Illiana Corridor.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife concurs with the February 12, 2013, "Draft Purpose and Need Statement." For the most part, the document lacks specifics regarding impacts upon natural resources. The DNR expects to provide a wider range of comments as this project proceeds, particularly during the alternatives analysis.

Please contact me at (317) 233-4666 if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Matt Buffington
Environmental Supervisor
Division of Fish and Wildlife

cc:

John Davis, Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Ken McMullen, Indiana Department of Transportation
Steven Schilke, Illinois Department of Transportation
Rick Rampone, Parsons Brinckerhoff



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CHICAGO DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
111 NORTH CANAL STREET
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60606-7206

April 22, 2013

Technical Services Division
Regulatory Branch
LRC-2011-00344

SUBJECT: NEPA/404 Merger Process Concurrence for Purpose and Need for the Illiana Corridor Tier II Study, Will County, Illinois and Lake County, Indiana

Norman Stoner
Federal Highway Administration
3250 Executive Park Drive
Springfield, Illinois 62703

Dear Mr. Stoner:

This letter is in response to your request that the Department of the Army (Corps) review the Illiana Expressway Tier EIS and provide concurrence with Purpose and Need for the proposed project. Various Federal and state agencies are providing a concurrent review of the project under the terms and conditions as set forth in the "Statewide Implementation Agreement National Environmental Policy Act And Clean Water Act Section 404 Concurrent NEPA/404 Processes For Transportation Projects in Illinois".

Following attendance at the April 16, 2013 NEPA/404 Merger updated meeting and through a thorough review of the project documents, the Corps concurs that all applicable information has been received as it pertains to the Concurrence Point for Purpose and Need.

Concurrence has now been reached for Purpose and Need. All documentation to date is sufficient for this stage and the project may now proceed to the next stage of project development. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Soren Hall of my staff by telephone at 312-846-5532, or email at Soren.G.Hall@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

Keith L. Wozniak
Chief, West Section
Regulatory Branch

Copy Furnished:
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Norm West)
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Shawn Cirton)
Illinois Department of Natural Resources (Steve Hamer)
FHWA (Matt Fuller)

R-013

From: Hamer, Steve [<mailto:Steve.Hamer@Illinois.gov>]
Sent: Monday, April 29, 2013 12:03 PM
To: Fuller, Matt (FHWA)
Subject: RE: Illiana Tier 2 Purpose and Need

Yes, I do concur with the Purpose and Need for the Illiana Tier 2.

Steve Hamer
Impact Analysis Section
Division of Ecosystems and Environment
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271
Ph. 217-785-4862

From: Matt.Fuller@dot.gov [<mailto:Matt.Fuller@dot.gov>]
Sent: Monday, April 29, 2013 11:37 AM
To: Hamer, Steve
Subject: Illiana Tier 2 Purpose and Need

Hi Steve, have you had a chance to review the PN for Illiana Tier 2 and does DNR concur with it?
Matt



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 5

77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD

CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

APR 30 2013

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF

RECEIVED

MAY 06 2013

FHWA

Matthew Fuller
Federal Highway Administration
3250 Executive Park Drive
Springfield, Illinois 62703

Re: **Concurrence for the Tier 2 Purpose and Need of the
Illiana Corridor in Lake County, Indiana and Will and Kankakee Counties, Illinois**

Dear Mr. Fuller:

Our letter is provided pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the Council on Environmental Quality NEPA Implementation Regulations, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), and the 2009 revision of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Federal Highway Administration/ Illinois Department of Transportation/ R5 EPA and other resource agencies regarding the use of a merged process for NEPA and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act permitting. The Illiana Corridor is being developed using that merged NEPA/ 404 process. We are a Cooperating Agency for this project and have been involved in multiple merger and related meetings, the Corridor Planning Group/Technical Task Force (CPG/TTF) meetings, and several discussions regarding the project purpose and need. We provided written comments and concurrence throughout the Tier 1 NEPA process.

This letter is to provide written confirmation of our verbal concurrence with the Illiana Corridor Tier 2 February 12, 2013 statement of Purpose and Need.

In providing this concurrence, we reiterate our long-standing recommendation that sustainability concepts be fully considered in the Tier 2 alternatives analysis, as committed to in the Tier 1 Record of Decision. We and other stakeholders engaged in the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process have put forth a number of sustainability concepts. Those include but are not limited to:

- 1) connectivity of human and natural environmental habitats along and across the corridor to minimize fragmentation;
- 2) significant efforts to protect and improve the water resources within and possibly beyond the project planning area;
- 3) native plantings and creation of natural habitats including wildlife crossings;
- 4) retention / creation of open space (prairie or forest) for noise reduction / mitigation and air quality benefits;
- 5) stormwater runoff management, pretreatment, and retention for this project;
- 6) pedestrian and bicycle facilities; and

7) project-provided funding and coordination for project-related land use planning by the area communities, counties and metropolitan planning organizations. We offer our concurrence based upon assurances that such concepts will be given consideration in the Tier 2 Alternatives discussions.

Should you have any questions regarding our comments, please feel free to contact me or my staff members, Liz Pelloso, at 312-886-7425 or pelloso.elizabeth@epa.gov, or Norm West, at 312-353-5692 or west.norman@epa.gov.

Sincerely,



Kenneth A. Westlake
Chief, NEPA Implementation Section
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

Cc: Steve Schilke, IDOT, Region 1
Kesti Susinskas, IDOT /AECOM, Region 1
Soren Hall, USACE Chicago District
Shawn Cirton, USFWS Barrington
Liz McCloskey, USFWS, IN
Steve Hamer, Illinois DNR, Division of Environment and Ecosystems
Terry Savko, Illinois Department of Agriculture
Jason Randolph, Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM)
Hala Kuss, IDEM-Northwest Regional Office
Mike Neyer, Indiana DNR, Division of Water
Anne Haaker, IL Historic Preservation Agency
Dan Heacock, Illinois EPA
James Glass, IN DNR, Div. of Historic Preservation and Archaeology
Matt Buffington, Indiana DNR, Fish and Wildlife Division
Laura Hilden, INDOT, Ofc. of Environmental Services
Ken McMullen, INDOT, Ofc. of Environmental Services
Robert Hommes, USFS-Midewin
Michelle Allen, FHWA, Indiana Division
Joyce Newland, FHWA, Indiana Division



KANKAKEE COUNTY BOARD

MICHAEL G. BOSSERT, CHAIRMAN

189 East Court Street, Suite 502

Kankakee, Illinois 60901

Telephone: (815) 937-3642 • Fax: (815) 937-3918

TO: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

RE: COMMENTS REGARDING PROPOSED ILLIANA EXPRESSWAY B-3 ALIGNMENT

The County of Kankakee supports the proposed Illiana B-3 build alternative, and reiterates the main points of the purpose and needs statement:

- The project will alleviate local system congestion and improve local system mobility
- The project will improve regional mobility
- The project will provide for efficient movement of freight

Kankakee County agrees with the purpose and needs statement, due in no small measure to an alarming increase in heavy truck traffic between I-55 and I-65 through the County of Kankakee, creating congestion on state and local highways.

In addition to supporting the B-3 build alternative, the County of Kankakee supports the addition of Illinois Route 50 access, as shown on the most recent alignment proposal, in order to support major industrial and commercial traffic generators located along Illinois Route 50 in northern Kankakee County.

October 8, 2013

Mr. Michael Bossert
Kankakee County Board
189 East Court Street
Suite 502
Kankakee, Illinois 60901

Dear Mr. Bossert:

Thank you for the comments from the Kankakee County Board, submitted on June 18, 2013, supporting the Illiana Corridor and an interchange at IL-50. We apologize for the delay in our reply.

On September 6, 2013, The Illiana Corridor Study Alternatives to be Carried Forward Technical Memorandum (ACFTM) was released and is available online for your review:

<http://www.illianacorridor.org/pdfs/drafttiertwoalternativestobecarrriedforwardtechnicalmemorandum.pdf>

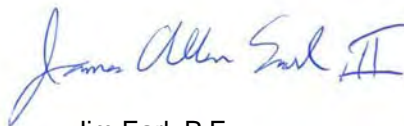
The ACFTM presents specific mainline alignment, interchange, and cross-road connectivity alternatives that resulted from the refinement of the approximate 2,000-foot wide Corridor B3 selected in Tier One of the study. These alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative, will be carried forward for detailed evaluation in the Tier Two Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). A technical recommendation of a preferred alternative may be presented in the DEIS. However, the formal selection of a preferred build alternative or a No-Action Alternative will not occur until after the completion of the DEIS public hearing comment period, which is anticipated in winter of 2013.

We thank the Kankakee County Board for your involvement in the study and for supporting the Illiana Corridor. We look forward to your continued participation in the study process. As you are aware, the most current project information is available for viewing on our project website: www.illianacorridor.org.


Sincerely,



Steve Schilke, P.E.
Consultant Studies Unit Head
Illiana Project Manager



Jim Earl, P.E.
Project Manager
Indiana Department of Transportation

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
THOMAS C. "TOM" GIARRANTE
MAYOR
815/724-3700
FAX 815/724-3715




**150 WEST JEFFERSON STREET
JOLIET, ILLINOIS 60432-4158**

September 13, 2013

Illinois Department of Transportation – Region 1
Attn: Katie Kukielka, P.E.
201 W. Center Court
Schaumburg, IL 60196-1096

BUREAU OF PROGRAMMING
RECEIVED

SEP 16 2013

DISTRICT #1

**Re: Illiana Corridor – Alternatives to be Carried Forward
Tier Two Environmental Impact Statement**

Dear Ms. Kukielka:

The City of Joliet has reviewed the Alternatives to be Carried Forward technical memorandum for the Illiana Corridor Study. The City supports the proposed alignment and the construction of the Illiana Expressway in order to enhance surface transportation throughout the region.

The City also strongly supports the inclusion and construction of an interchange at Illinois Route 53 as part of the project. The inclusion of the interchange will allow a safe and efficient route for vehicles serving the intermodal facilities in the Joliet area to reach their destination. Interstate 80 and its multiple interchanges are currently insufficient to meet the demand for moving goods and products safely and efficiently through Joliet and Will County.

Of the alternative interchange designs proposed, the City of Joliet strongly supports the inclusion of Alternative 4A-1 in the plans. Alternative 4A-1 provides the only direct connection from the Illiana to Route 5 and provides the best opportunity to provide an additional route for truck traffic currently utilizing Interstate 80. Utilizing one of the alternative interchange designs or providing no access at Route 53 would severely limit access to Illiana from the intermodal facilities in the area.

The City believes that the Illiana Expressway is good for Joliet's 147,000 residents and the City's business partners. The City looks forward to continued participation in the Illiana Corridor Study.

Respectfully submitted,

**Thomas C. Giarrante
Mayor**

cc **Thomas A. Thanas, City Manager**
James R. Trizna, P.E., Director of Public Works
Gregory P. Ruddy, P.E., Public Works Administrator
John Greuling, CEO of Will County Center for Economic Development



201 W. Center Court
Schaumburg, Illinois 60196

100 N. Senate Avenue, #N642
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

www.illianacorridor.org

October 8, 2013

Mayor Thomas Giarrante
City of Joliet
150 West Jefferson Street
Joliet, Illinois 60432-4158

Dear Mayor Giarrante:

Thank you for your September 13, 2013 comments on the Alternatives to be Carried Forward Technical Memorandum (ACFTM). Your support of the Illiana Corridor, including an interchange at IL-53 known as Alternative 4A-1, has been included in the project record.

The alternatives presented in the ACFTM, including the No-Action Alternative, will be carried forward for detailed evaluation in the Tier Two Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). A technical recommendation of a preferred alternative may be presented in the DEIS. However, the formal selection of a preferred build alternative or a No-Action Alternative will not occur until after the completion of the DEIS public hearing comment period, which is anticipated in winter of 2013.

We thank the City of Joliet for your involvement in the study and for supporting the Illiana Corridor. We look forward to the City of Joliet's continued participation. As you are aware, the most current project information is available for viewing on our project website: www.illianacorridor.org.

Sincerely,

Steve Schilke, P.E.
Consultant Studies Unit Head
Illiana Project Manager

Jim Earl, P.E.
Project Manager
Indiana Department of Transportation



Illinois Department
of Transportation



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

R-020



File Code: 1900

Date: SEP 26 2013

Steve Schilke
c/o Katie Kukielka, P.E.
Illinois Department of Transportation
Region One/District 1
201 W. Center Court
Schaumburg, IL 60196

Dear Mr. Schilke:

I am writing in response to your request for comments on the draft Tier Two "Illiana Corridor Study Alternatives to be Carried Forward Technical Memorandum" (ACFTM) released September 6, 2013. Using the nomenclature established in this memorandum, my comments are specific to Sections 1, 2, 3, and 4 since these sections will have the most impact at Midewin. As a general comment, the maps depicting Midewin's boundary along New River Road is inaccurate. Midewin's boundary crosses New River Road west of where Prairie Creek empties into the Kankakee River. Midewin then owns property on both sides of New River Road for a short distance before the boundary crosses back over the road. Our previously transmitted GIS data should reflect this. If you need the files again, please contact me and I can supply the information again. I do not see any encroachment issues with any of the alternatives presented, but please accurately portray our boundary on your maps and drawings.

Since this is a two tier NEPA process and the corridor was established in Tier 1, the alternatives presented in the ACFTM more closely resemble design modifications than traditional NEPA alternatives. As you are aware, Midewin was not in favor of adopting the B3 Corridor as the preferred corridor at the close of Tier 1. Therefore all of my comments offered during Tier 2 discussions must be prefaced with the fact that I am now trying to make the best out of the situation at hand, while continuing to request that the corridor be placed farther from Midewin's border.

The alternatives presented for Sections 1, 2, 3, and 4 represent a diverse array of interchange and alignment options. Having attended most of the planning and public meetings over the past two years, I conclude that the alternatives presented represent a majority of possible solutions to fitting the Illiana into the B3 corridor, but not all. I would like to have seen a traffic model constructed that predicts what effect closing the I-55/ New River Road would have on traffic volumes on the Illiana and Route 53.

As for the Section 4 alternatives for including an interchange at or near Route 53, I agree that all of these alternatives deserve to be included for additional study. I can reiterate that Midewin sees increased traffic on Route 53, New River Road, or South Arsenal Road as a conflict with




our goals and objectives and would favor any alternative that lessens the volume of traffic on these existing roads.

In conclusion, the ACTFM contains alternatives that when fully analyzed should provide an adequate basis for decision in the Tier Two Environmental Impact Statement.

As mentioned above, and relayed to you in letters and meetings, Midewin continues to argue for a better corridor than B3 for sections 1, 2, 3, and 4. Attached are pages describing the major issues that we feel have not been fully addressed by your team or that will simply move into mitigation stages when relocation of the highway now is actually the better solution.

Sincerely,



Wade A. Spang
Prairie Supervisor
Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
USDA Forest Service
30239 S. State Route 53, Wilmington IL 60481

OBJECTION TITLE:

**PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENTS LACKING
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS**

THE OBJECTION:

- Purpose and need statements do not mention conservation and environmental goals. The purpose of the Illiana Corridor should include requirements to address the needs in such a manner as to preserve and enhance wherever possible the habitats of plants, wildlife, and society living in or proximate to the proposed corridor.

AREA AND OR LOCATION OF THE OBJECTION:

- This objection is for the entire length of the proposed highway from I55 east to I-65

STATUS UPDATE ON THE OBJECTION(s):

- As of May 2013 - the Federal Highways Administration, the Illinois Department of Transportation, and the assigned Planning Team contactor have not adequately addressed the objection
- This objection was not addressed or remedied in Tier 1 therefore, I continue to request this be addressed or remedied in tier 2

BENEFIT OF THE PROJECT STATEMENT(s):

- Being Green – for the Federal Highways Administration, the Illinois & Indiana Departments of Transportation, and the assigned Planning Team, this an opportunity to build a state-of-the-art green highway that would be known and envied in your industry's circles for its innovative incorporation of conservation and environmental design features. Funding for conservation-minded improvements are often supported by generous private interest groups that reward progressive thinking in the form of dollars.
- The proposed highway impacts several conservation areas in Illinois and Indiana plus farm lands and impacts several threatened and endangered species.

RESOLUTION:

- The USDA Forest Service agrees with and confirms the following excerpt from the United States Environmental Protection Agency concurrence letter dated April 30, 2013; Tier 2 shall fully consider sustainability concepts such as, but not limited to:
 - Connectivity of human and natural environmental habitats along and across the corridor to minimize fragmentation
 - Significant efforts to protect and improve water resources within and possibly beyond the project planning area
 - Native plantings and creation of natural habitats including wildlife crossings
 - Retention/creation of open space for noise reduction/mitigation and air quality benefits
 - Storm water runoff management, pretreatment, and retention for this project
 - Pedestrian and bicycle facilities
 - Project-provided funding and coordination for project related land use planning by the area communities, counties, and metropolitan planning organizations

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
USDA Forest Service
30239 S. State Route 53, Wilmington IL 60481

OBJECTION TITLE:

**CORRIDOR WITH I-55 TERMINUS SOUTH OF WILMINGTON
NOT CONSIDERED FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS IN DEIS**

THE OBJECTION:

- At the close of the Draft EIS, three corridors were presented as alternatives to best meet the purpose and need of the Illiana project, with the intent to choose only one as the preferred corridor. None of the corridors (A3S2, B3, and B4) had a western terminus at I-55 south of Wilmington.

AREA AND OR LOCATION OF THE OBJECTION:

- This objection is for the section of the proposed highway from I-55 east to US 45 in Illinois.

STATUS UPDATE ON THE OBJECTION(s):

- First requested review of viable alternatives in the C Alignment of the I-55 terminus in USFS letter to Illinois DOT dated March 8, 2012.
- Re-stated in USFS letter dated November 6, 2012 after review of Preferred Corridor Study dated October 2012.
- Tier one Record of Decision signed 07/17/2013 without detailed analysis of western terminus south of Wilmington.

BENEFIT OF THE PROJECT STATEMENT(s):

- A corridor with a terminus at I-55 south of Wilmington would preserve the connectivity of Midewin to the city of Wilmington, the Des Plaines Conservation area, the Kankakee River, and the town of Symerton.
- Predominant long distance traffic flow through the study zone is southwest to northwest. A corridor with that orientation should produce viable traffic counts for the highway.
- Keeping the corridor south of Wilmington adds distance between Midewin and the adverse effects of noise, light, air pollution, and congestion on and leading to the highway.
- A more southern connection point to I-55 could include future extension of the highway west towards Morris, IL, whereas the B3 corridor will not accommodate any westward extension.

RESOLUTION:

- When the proper weight is given to the adverse effects the B3 corridor will have on habitat at Midewin, and other viable routes that satisfy existing traffic patterns are given full consideration, the B3 corridor will not emerge as the preferred corridor.
- Move the connection of the Illiana to I-55 south of Braidwood, IL.

**Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
USDA Forest Service**

30239 S. State Route 53, Wilmington IL 60481

OBJECTION TITLE:

**PROTECTION OF MIDEWIN UNDER SECTION 4(f) OF THE
TRANSPORTATION ACT OF 1966**

THE OBJECTION:

- The Draft Environmental Impact Statement issued July 2012 made reference to the fact that only those portions of Midewin open to the public for recreational activities would be considered protected by Section 4(f) of the Transportation Act of 1966.

AREA AND OR LOCATION OF THE OBJECTION:

- This objection is for the sections 1, 2, 3 and 4 as described in the Illiana corridor study Alternatives to be Carried Forward Memorandum (ACTFM), in the vicinity of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.

STATUS UPDATE ON THE OBJECTION(s):

- Objection was cited in USFS letter to Illinois DOT dated August 29, 2012.
- Clarification and acceptance of all of Midewin as having protection under Section 4(f) of the Transportation act of 1966 was resolved at coordination meeting held at Midewin on November 14, 2012.

BENEFIT OF THE PROJECT STATEMENT(s):

- Midewin will be eligible for *de minimus* or higher remediation measures due to adverse effects on activities, features, or attributes resulting from construction of the highway as determined by the Act.
- Attempting to locate a highway on protected 4(f) property requires substantial evidence as stated in the Act to prove that using a 4(f) protected property is the only viable option available to complete the project.

RESOLUTION :

- Use existing legislation to bolster Midewin's mission regarding the preservation and protection of natural habitat at Midewin.

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
USDA Forest Service
30239 S. State Route 53, Wilmington IL 60481

OBJECTION TITLE:

NEGATIVE IMPACT TO AIR QUALITY

THE OBJECTION:

- Pollutants generated during the construction and use of the Illiana throughout its projected lifespan will adversely affect the air quality around Midewin.

AREA AND OR LOCATION OF THE OBJECTION:

- This objection is for the sections 1 ,2 ,3 and 4 as described in the Illiana corridor study Alternatives to be Carried Forward Memorandum (ACTFM), in the vicinity of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

STATUS UPDATE ON THE OBJECTION(s):

- The January 2013 Record of Decision requires Tier Two to address conformity requirements of Section 176(c) of the Clean Air Act.
- As of June 2013 we are unaware of even any preliminary steps being taken to address conformity as specified in this Act.

BENEFIT OF THE PROJECT STATEMENT(s):

- Reduced air quality can have detrimental effects on plants and animals in the affected area. Assuring that the Illiana is designed and constructed to meet regional conformity is essential for maintaining some level of air quality that will continue to support habitat improvements at Midewin.

RESOLUTION:

- The Illiana should address the provisions of section 176(c) of the Clean air Act.

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
USDA Forest Service
30239 S. State Route 53, Wilmington IL 60481

OBJECTION TITLE:

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC NOISE ANALYSIS AND ABATEMENT

THE OBJECTION:

- Noise from traffic on the Illiana, in addition to the noise from increased traffic on Route 53 due to the Illiana, will have adverse effects on grassland birds and recreational opportunities at Midewin.

AREA AND OR LOCATION OF THE OBJECTION:

- This objection is for the sections 1, 2, 3 and 4 as described in the Illiana corridor study Alternatives to be Carried Forward Memorandum (ACTFM), in the vicinity of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

STATUS UPDATE ON THE OBJECTION(s):

- Midewin first raised this issue during Tier one, but was assured that this would be addressed during Tier Two.
- Noise issue was described in Midewin's response to questionnaire on indirect and cumulative effects sent to the Illiana project team on June 13, 2013.

BENEFIT OF THE PROJECT STATEMENT(s):

- Published studies such as: Foreman, et al., 2002 confirms that grassland birds can be negatively affected by traffic noise up to 1200 meters from the roadway.
- Midewin's size, in comparison to other protected natural areas in northern Illinois, makes it unique in that portions of the interior of Midewin are still remote enough that the sounds of mechanized civilization fade and the breeze through the grass and the calls of grassland birds are the predominant sounds of the landscape. Locating the Illiana in the B3 Corridor will reduce or possibly eliminate these quiet remote areas on Midewin.
- Midewin is home to a Native American burial site which deserves to be preserved in serenity.

RESOLUTION:

- As described in the United States Code of Federal Regulations Part 772(23CFR772), Midewin shall request that its property be classified as Activity Category A. This activity category includes exterior impact criteria for lands on which serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance and serve an important public need, and where the preservation of those qualities is essential for the area to continue to serve its intended purpose.
- Apply the highest mitigation actions for sections 1, 2, 3, and 4 allowed for Category A Noise Abatement Criteria.

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
USDA Forest Service
30239 S. State Route 53, Wilmington IL 60481

OBJECTION TITLE:

LIGHT TRESPASS ONTO MIDEWIN

THE OBJECTION:

- Intrusion of light from vehicles and light fixtures on the Illiana will have adverse effects on nocturnal species at Midewin
- Recreational opportunities for astronomical viewing on Midewin will be diminished.

AREA AND OR LOCATION OF THE OBJECTION:

- This objection is for the sections 1 ,2 ,3 and 4 as described in the Illiana corridor study Alternatives to be Carried Forward Memorandum (ACTFM), in the vicinity of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

STATUS UPDATE ON THE OBJECTION(s):

- Midewin first raised this issue during Tier one, but was assured that this would be addressed during Tier Two.
- Lighting issues were described in Midewin's response to questionnaire on indirect and cumulative effects sent to the Illiana project team on June 13, 2013.

BENEFIT OF THE PROJECT STATEMENT(s):

- As development in Will County continues the night sky around Midewin will continue to become less dark. Without control, this increased light will affect bats and other nocturnal animals that currently inhabit Midewin.

RESOLUTION:

- The elimination of lighting in those areas where it is not essential. For those areas such as intersections that require lighting for safety, insist on fixtures that do not send stray light up into the sky or onto adjacent properties.
- Apply the highest mitigation actions allowable for light trespass in Sections 1, 2, 3, and 4.

**Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
USDA Forest Service**

30239 S. State Route 53, Wilmington IL 60481

OBJECTION TITLE:

Illinois Land and Conservation Act – Road Construction Limitations

THE OBJECTION:

- Midewin land identified within the study area as a possible location of the highway developments would be *inconsistent* with the Illinois Land Conservation Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-106; 110 Stat 594)

AREA AND OR LOCATION OF THE OBJECTION:

- This objection is for the sections 1 ,2 ,3 and 4 as described in the Illiana corridor study Alternatives to be Carried Forward Memorandum (ACTFM), in the vicinity of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

STATUS UPDATE ON THE OBJECTION(s):

- Verbally stated to IDOT at a very early planning meeting in 2011
- Restated in letters to IDOT in July 2011 and March 2012
- The footprint of the proposed highway remains off Midewin property, however the B3 corridor, planned to be 2,000 feet wide, is so close to Midewin's southern border that in order for it to not encroach on Midewin it had to be narrowed to less than the 2,000 foot width.

BENEFIT OF THE PROJECT STATEMENT(s):

- Midewin is bound to uphold the law as stated in the Illinois Land Conservation Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-10; 110 Stat 594; section 2915(a)) expressly prohibits new construction of any through road. *"Prohibition Against the Construction of New Through Roads. - No new construction of any highway, public road, or any part of an interstate system, whether Federal, State, or local shall be permitted through or across any portions of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie."* In addition, the official map of the Illinois Land Conservation Act (P.L. 104-106, § 2912(e); 110 Stat. 598) identifies the future land addition to the Department of Agriculture-Forest Service - Midewin. Therefore, any alternative that proposes crossing any part of Midewin or the future lands that will ultimately be transferred to the Department of Agriculture-Forest Service – Midewin *is not viable*

RESOLUTION:

- Move B3 corridor sections 1-4 to a new location south of Braidwood, IL as proposed in earlier meetings

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
USDA Forest Service
30239 S. State Route 53, Wilmington IL 60481

OBJECTION TITLE:

Highway Plans Conflict with Original Vision for Midewin

THE OBJECTION:

- Even in its current location the proposed B3 corridor, due to its close proximity to Midewin, encroaches on the “intent” of the federal act, which is to protect natural conservation areas like Midewin.

AREA AND OR LOCATION OF THE OBJECTION:

- This objection is for the sections 1 ,2 ,3 and 4 as described in the Illiana corridor study Alternatives to be Carried Forward Memorandum (ACTFM), in the vicinity of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

STATUS UPDATE ON THE OJECETION(s):

- Midewin Prairie Plan made available to IDOT 1n 2011

BENEFIT OF THE PROJECT STATEMET(s):

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RESOLUTION:

- Transportation has been the heart and soul of northeast Illinois since the beginning, and the need for an east west corridor through Will County was foreseen as early as 1909 in the Burnham Plan of Chicago. Realizing that transportation expansion in this area was inevitable, the legislators who passed the Illinois Land and Conservation Act of 1995 included language to prohibit new roads and freeways across Midewin. As the recipients of the land now known as Midewin, the Forest Service is a relative newcomer to the area, but we do not come without a long tradition of caring for the land and serving people. We ask that the Illiana Corridor Team take a similar approach when moving through this process to assure that the needs of the people and the environment are satisfied. The team must use the latest methods and technology available today to design a socially and environmentally acceptable highway that serves industry, farmers, researchers, recreation enthusiasts, and residents equally well. It will be more costly than just laying down a concrete ribbon that goes from point A to point B as envisioned in 1909, but I challenge you to design a highway that is conservation minded and viable now, and that will remain viable for the next 100 years.

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
USDA Forest Service
30239 S. State Route 53, Wilmington IL 60481

OBJECTION TITLE:

Highway Will Fragment Habitat

THE OBJECTION:

- Your transportation facility will in no way enhance or conserve native populations and habitats. Instead the added noise, light, and the physical barrier of the roadway itself will have adverse effects on migratory bird and monarch butterfly patterns in the area.
- Local circulation of deer and other small mammals will also be affected by the isolating nature of the roadway. Existing Interstate 55 already cuts Midewin off from unimpeded access for wildlife following the Des Plaines River to the west of us, and the B3 corridor would create the same type of impediment between Midewin and the Kankakee River.

AREA AND OR LOCATION OF THE OBJECTION:

- This objection is for the sections 1 ,2 ,3 and 4 as described in the Illiana corridor study Alternatives to be Carried Forward Memorandum (ACTFM), in the vicinity of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

STATUS UPDATE ON THE OJECETION(s):

- One of the management challenges at Midewin is to reduce fragmentation that currently exists due to roads, fencerows, and woody vegetation. Adding a new highway to the south of Midewin will add to fragmentation in the area
- Comments included in Midewin's June 2013 response to IDOT questionnaire

BENEFIT OF THE PROJECT STATEMET(s):

- Locating the highway farther from Midewin would allow for the development of land use more in line with Midewin's goals and objectives

RESOLUTION:

- Locate roads and exits that promote development proximate to Midewin that does not increase fragmentation or traffic in the area.
- To provide habitat for a large number of bird and other species, it will be necessary to reduce fragmentation by connecting larger open grasslands. Large open areas from 300 to 3,000 acres in size must be managed in order to provide prime habitat for a suite of grassland-dependent birds
- In addition to the habitat and wildlife concerns stated earlier we would like to add that Midewin's vision for the future is to re-establish a natural and serene environment not available elsewhere in Northeastern Illinois and provide access to that environment for the visiting public. Recognizing that in-and-out traffic is the life-blood of any industrial park including our neighbors at Island City or Deer Run, but in order for us to protect this national treasured landscape in its most natural state, all types of traffic serving the industrial parks, including truck, rail, or air carrier (indirectly via the South Suburban Airport) in sections 1-4, need to be routed away from Midewin. (ie: south of Braidwood, IL)

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
USDA Forest Service
30239 S. State Route 53, Wilmington IL 60481

OBJECTION TITLE:

Highway will Decrease Connectivity to Local Communities

THE OBJECTION:

- Any new transportation facility between us and the communities will act as a barrier that isolates instead of connects us to those communities.
- Midewin's connection to the surrounding communities is vital to the socio-economic success of both the communities and Midewin. In its current form the B3 corridor cuts between Midewin and the communities of Symerton and Wilmington. Having this multi-lane barrier between us limits opportunities for access between established businesses in the communities and the natural area available at Midewin. This limited access could result in fewer long term jobs that are focused on the Great Outdoor Experience and utilize Midewin as their destination.
- Midewin's vision is to bring visitors (passenger vehicles) to the area and have the surrounding communities provide the required amenities to make them comfortable. Therefore busses, bike routes, or tour trams that originate in the transportation hubs around us such as Joliet, Elwood, Wilmington, or Manhattan will become very important as restoration of the prairie progresses. Facilities such as Metra and the Illiana should concentrate on bringing the public to those hubs, and then utilize the secondary roads to access Midewin.

AREA AND OR LOCATION OF THE OBJECTION:

- This objection is for the sections 1 ,2 ,3 and 4 as described in the Illiana corridor study Alternatives to be Carried Forward Memorandum (ACTFM), in the vicinity of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

STATUS UPDATE ON THE OBJECTION(s):

- Included in Midewin's June 2013 response to IDOT questionnaire

BENEFIT OF THE PROJECT STATEMENT(s):

- In order to achieve the goals of the Prairie Plan, and also provide needed amenities for visitors, we will rely on the surrounding communities to offer those amenities such as food, refreshments, lodging, etc. .

RESOLUTION:

- Move B3 corridor sections 1-4 to a new location south of Braidwood, IL .

**Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
USDA Forest Service**

30239 S. State Route 53, Wilmington IL 60481

OBJECTION TITLE:

Serenity Impacts

THE OBJECTION:

- If the Illiana is constructed in the B3 corridor, we may need to reconsider where we plan to provide recreational experiences at Midewin
- The impact of noise and scenery on humans' experience of the great outdoors at Midewin would be significant. The proposed Illiana traffic plus the increased traffic on Route 53, North River Road, and South Arsenal Road would substantially reduce our recreational areas that provide solitude and remote sensation of the great outdoors.

AREA AND OR LOCATION OF THE OBJECTION:

- This objection is for the sections 1 ,2 ,3 and 4 as described in the Illiana corridor study Alternatives to be Carried Forward Memorandum (ACTFM), in the vicinity of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

STATUS UPDATE ON THE OBJECTION(s):

- Included in Midewin's June 2013 response to IDOT questionnaire

BENEFIT OF THE PROJECT STATEMENT(s):

- Locating the corridor farther from Midewin would reduce the effect noise and light generated by the highway will have on the habitats at Midewin.

RESOLUTION:

- Need to design the highway such that it minimizes impacts to trails, access points, and recreational areas so that humans would have a positive recreational experience not impaired by noise and visual concerns.

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
USDA Forest Service
30239 S. State Route 53, Wilmington IL 60481

OBJECTION TITLE:

Prescribed Fire Impediment

THE OBJECTION:

- The addition of a major transportation facility within the B3 corridor would further impede and restrict our prescribed burning program.
- Without ample opportunities for prescribed fire on Midewin, Prairie Plan management goal 2.9.2, "Restore or maintain desired plant community attributes, as well as ecological processes through the use of prescribed fire." will be difficult or impossible to achieve.

AREA AND OR LOCATION OF THE OBJECTION:

- This objection is for the sections 1 ,2 ,3 and 4 as described in the Illiana corridor study Alternatives to be Carried Forward Memorandum (ACTFM), in the vicinity of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

STATUS UPDATE ON THE OBJECTION(s):

- Included in Midewin's June 2013 response to IDOT questionnaire

BENEFIT OF THE PROJECT STATEMENT(s):

- The restored prairies and wetlands require periodic prescribed burning. Already, existing Interstate 55 and Illinois Route 53 greatly restrict prescribed fire opportunities at Midewin. With another highway in the B3 corridor windows of opportunity where wind and atmospheric conditions are allowable for burning without affection one of the highways will diminish.

RESOLUTION:

- Move B3 corridor sections 1-4 to a new location south of Braidwood, IL

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
USDA Forest Service
30239 S. State Route 53, Wilmington IL 60481

OBJECTION TITLE:

Native American Burial Site within A.P.E.

THE OBJECTION:

- We have identified a Native American burial site on Midewin that falls within the Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the Illiana project.

AREA AND OR LOCATION OF THE OBJECTION:

- This objection is for the sections 1 ,2 ,3 and 4 as described in the Illiana corridor study Alternatives to be Carried Forward Memorandum (ACTFM), in the vicinity of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

STATUS UPDATE ON THE OBJECTION(s):

- Midewin has participated in Illinois Section 106 consulting to provide information on potential historic and archeological site in the project area.

BENEFIT OF THE PROJECT STATEMENT(s):

- Integrity of the site must be maintained and not threatened by the development of the highway

RESOLUTION:

- Assure that all highway alternatives avoid direct impacts to the site and that sound levels in accordance with NAC Category A are not exceeded at the site.
- Apply the highest mitigation actions available due to inclusion within the APE

**Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
USDA Forest Service**

30239 S. State Route 53, Wilmington IL 60481

OBJECTION TITLE:

Additional Traffic on State Route 53

THE OBJECTION:

- Route 53 will become a major feeder/exit route for trucks and other vehicles using the new highway.
- Locating an interchange at or near Illinois Route 53 for the Illiana, with the intent of funneling truck traffic onto your facility, conflicts with our plans to enhance habitat. The increased noise and light from this additional traffic through the center of our property will affect bird nesting habits and wildlife circulation.
- Midewin staff and visitors needing to cross Route 53, including school buses bringing children to our programs, will face an increased safety risk from the increased truck traffic.
- Any alternative that increases noise, light, untreated water discharge, or even the likelihood of a hazardous material spill due to increased truck trips adjacent to Midewin, will result in a decreased area for grassland birds and nocturnal species to nest, breed, forage, and thrive.

AREA AND OR LOCATION OF THE OBJECTION:

- This objection is for the sections 1 ,2 ,3 and 4 as described in the Illiana corridor study Alternatives to be Carried Forward Memorandum (ACTFM), in the vicinity of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

STATUS UPDATE ON THE OBJECTION(s):

- Included in Midewin's June 2013 response to IDOT questionnaire

BENEFIT OF THE PROJECT STATEMENT(s):

- Controlled speeds and traffic volumes on Route 53 will help better align with Midewin's goals and objectives.

RESOLUTION:

- Mitigation of these cumulative effects has not even been mentioned as part of the Illiana project, yet they pose a very real concern for Midewin.
- Apply the highest mitigation actions allowable to offset increased noise and light from existing State Route 53.

September 27, 2013

We oppose the recommendations for, and continued study of, a refined corridor for the proposed Illiana tollroad in the interim document, "Alternatives to be Carried Forward Technical Memorandum" ("Interim Report"). We remain concerned that the proposed Illiana tollroad (and remaining interchange alternatives) will move too little traffic for too high a price, causing severe damage to federal and state protected natural, historic and agricultural resources well beyond the impacts disclosed in the Interim Report. Instead of building a strong systemic transportation solution, the Illiana near its western terminus would merely funnel trucks onto local roads, like Historic Route 66, contrary to the Congressional intent to restore the integrity of this area as the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie and the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery for military veterans. Today's recommendation from the staff of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) not to include the proposed tollroad in the CMAP GO TO 2040 plan makes clear that the Illiana would expose State transportation funding to "extensive financial risk," while achieving "negligible impacts on regional transportation performance." CMAP, *Recommendation on Proposed Illiana Corridor* (September 27, 2013) at 2, available at <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/20583/25609/staff+rec+doc.pdf/9a87d4f5-06f6-450b-bf2d-ce0c7ed6dd17>. These comments incorporate by reference CMAP staff's thorough recommendation document, and we maintain strongly that this study process must take into account CMAP staff's findings.

The Illiana Tier 2 analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) continues to premise the purpose and need of the tollroad on a skewed and outmoded portrayal of regional growth that undermines the GO TO 2040 principles unanimously adopted by CMAP. See the joint comment letter, "Comments Opposing IDOT's Request to Include the Illiana Tollroad as a Constrained Project in the GO TO 2040 Plan", submitted by the undersigned organizations to CMAP on September 3, 2013, which we incorporate by reference in this letter. As CMAP staff put very succinctly in today's recommendation, "The Illiana is being planned for a future out of step with GO TO 2040." CMAP Staff Recommendation at 11. We maintain that the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement was not properly conducted, and resulted in the advancement for further study of an alternative that will not serve a legitimate transportation need. These comments incorporate by reference all of our objections to the Tier 1 environmental study process, as well as our objections to the Tier 2 draft purpose and need statement.

The Interim Report does little to clarify how the people in our region (and our State) will subsidize the project, other than to admit that it will be necessary to contribute an undetermined but likely massive amount of taxpayer dollars. We share the apprehension of both CMAP staff and the Metropolitan Planning Council that national cost estimates for comparable projects are higher than Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) projected cost for the Illiana tollroad. Even using IDOT's cost figures, the public private partnership model would still expose taxpayers to a high risk of debt that would force the region to gut or sacrifice funding for other priority projects. Every dollar spent on the Illiana is a dollar not available for other pressing transportation repair, maintenance, and construction needs. CMAP staff have concluded that the proposed tollroad would require a public subsidy of anywhere from \$440 million to \$1.1 billion. CMAP Staff Recommendation at 7. IDOT earlier validated such concerns by suggesting in a recent fact sheet that the region could divert almost a billion dollars

from a priority I-55 managed lanes project in Cook, DuPage, and Will Counties to help pay for the proposed Illiana tollroad. See http://www.illianacorridor.org/pdfs/IllianaFactSheet3_082613_FINAL_SinglePages.pdf at 3.

Beyond cost concerns, we question several of the Interim Report's conclusions:

- 1) The Interim Report reaches two seemingly contradictory conclusions: i) that including an interchange at Illinois Route 53 would attract over 10,000 additional vehicles a day to the proposed tollroad, but also ii) that very little of this additional traffic would also use Illinois Route 53. The Interim Report's analysis should be clarified to explain why vehicles that would use the Illiana tollroad because of an interchange with Illinois Route 53 would not also use Illinois Route 53 itself.

First, the Interim Report suggests that including an interchange at Route 53 would attract significantly more vehicles to the proposed tollroad. For the Illiana segment connecting I-55 in the west to Route 53 in the east, the Interim Report predicts that either 13,300 or 11,700 additional vehicles would use the tollroad. Compare Interim Report Table 4-19 at page 82 with Table 4-6 at page 36.¹ To put these figures in perspective, the first figure, a 13,300-vehicle increase, would mean that including a Route 53 interchange would nearly double the amount of average daily traffic (ADT) on the Illiana segment connecting I-55 to Route 53. The Interim Report also predicts increased traffic on the two segments of the proposed tollroad directly east of Route 53 if an interchange is added, concluding that there would be 1,400 to 3,200 additional ADT from Route 53 in the west to IL-45 in the east. Interim Report Table 4-19 at page 82.

This first conclusion seems at odds with the Interim Report's second conclusion about a Route 53 interchange: that this massive predicted increase in traffic on the proposed tollroad would not yield a comparable increase in traffic on Route 53 itself. The Interim Report concludes that including a Route 53 interchange would increase average daily traffic on Route 53 from South Arsenal Road in the south to Hoff Road in the north by 2,400 vehicles per day compared to the "no-build" scenario, and by 3,900 vehicles a day compared to an Illiana tollroad built without any interchanges in the vicinity of Route 53.

These two conclusions seem inconsistent. What aspect of a Route 53 interchange would attract over 10,000 additional vehicles to the proposed tollroad per day, if the overwhelmingly majority of those vehicles are not actually using Route 53 to access the tollroad? Where, exactly, would the additional traffic predicted for the Illiana be entering and exiting the tollroad, if not Route 53? Also, which alternative routes is this traffic predicted to use in the "no-build" scenario?

One explanation could be that the analysis has predicted that thousands of additional vehicles would exit Route 53, and then use local arterials such as River Road or Peotone Road instead of proceeding north on Route 53. If so, have the Illiana planners evaluated the impact of new tollroad-related traffic on those arterial roads?

¹ The analysis should clarify which, in fact, is the predicted increase.

- 2) IDOT fails to account for significant natural resources that would likely be harmed by building and operating the Illiana tollroad.

For example, the description of impacts in Section 2 excludes reference to a bird rookery on an island in the Kankakee River east of Luther's Island in Wilmington, Illinois, which is known to harbor hundreds of Great Blue Heron, Great Egrets, and other rare cormorant species that nest at that location, as well as a rare blue bullfrog. The rookery is within a mile of the proposed bridge over the Kankakee River. An owner of one of Luther's islands has routinely and increasingly sighted five bald eagles, including a juvenile, which frequently hunt fish in the Kankakee River in the immediate area. The Kankakee River, itself, should be listed as an Illinois Natural Areas Inventory site that is a protected Nature Area. The Interim Report excludes reference to the Prairie Fringed orchid, a federally listed species, in the Des Plaines Conservation Area, between I-55 and Midewin, north of River Road, which we previously referenced in our Tier 1 comment letter. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service holds a management plan to monitor the species and its habitat for establishment on Midewin.




For all sections, it appears that IDOT merely references what it perceives as direct wetland impacts, rather than the full gamut of direct, indirect and cumulative impacts that it must evaluate under NEPA.

- 3) The environmental review continues to omit a full analysis of potential damage to regionally significant natural and cultural resources. IDOT compartmentalizes impacts, rather than recognizing compounded pressure on resources from the multitude of impacts from the tollroad project.

For instance, IDOT discloses that the tollroad would possibly impact federal and state-listed threatened and endangered species along the proposed route, which were not listed as potentially adverse impacts in Tier 1. The importance of these resources and scale of the potential impacts underscore the need for a true impact analysis of state and federal natural resources at a much larger scale.

These comments are not meant to represent an exhaustive list of our concerns with the "Alternatives to Be Carried Forward" analysis or the Tier 2 environmental study process, as a whole. Instead, these comments flag several issues which we will expand upon and supplement as the study process progresses.

Sincerely,

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND POLICY CENTER	OPENLANDS
 Andrew Armstrong Staff Attorney Environmental Law and Policy Center 35 East Wacker Drive, Suite 1600 Chicago, IL 60601 aarmstrong@elpc.org 312.751.3738	 Stacy Meyers Policy Coordinator Openlands 25 E. Washington, Suite 1650 Chicago, Illinois 60602 Smeyers@openlands.org 312.863.6265
SIERRA CLUB, ILLINOIS CHAPTER	
 Cindy Skrukrud Sierra Club, Illinois Chapter Clean Water Advocate 70 East Lake Street, Suite 1500 Chicago, Illinois 60601 Cindy.skrukrud@sierraclub.org 312.251.1680 x110	

DNR

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Michael R. Pence, Governor
Cameron F. Clark, Director

Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology • 402 W. Washington Street, W274 • Indianapolis, IN 46204-2739
Phone 317-232-1646 • Fax 317-232-0693 • dhpa@dnr.IN.gov



October 4, 2013

Matt Fuller
Environmental Programs Engineer
Illinois Division Office
Federal Highway Administration
3250 Executive Park Drive
Springfield, Illinois 62563

Federal Agency: Federal Highway Administration ("FHWA")

Re: *Alternatives to be Carried Forward Technical Memorandum, Illiana Corridor Tier Two Environmental Impact Statement* (September 2013 draft) (INDOT Des. No. 1006456; DHPA No. 11913)

Dear Mr. Fuller:

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the staff of the Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer ("Indiana SHPO") has reviewed the aforementioned "DRAFT Purpose and Need Statement," which we received on September 6, 2013, in preparation for the October 10, 2013, NEPA-404 Merger Meeting regarding concurrence on this aspect of Tier Two of the Illiana Corridor, which might have impacts in Lake County, Indiana, and in Kankakee and Will counties, Illinois.

We will limit our comments here to issues in Indiana, in deference to our Illinois counterparts, and to issues pertaining to cultural resources (archaeological and above-ground), in deference to the other Indiana state resource agencies that are participating in this review.

In light of the information provided to date, it does not appear likely that either Alternative 9A or Alternative 9B would have an adverse impact on the Cutler Farm (Survey ID 72), which is considered to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Consequently, we do not have a preference between those two alternatives, with respect to above-ground historic properties.

It also does not appear likely at this time that either Alternative 12A-1, Alternative 12B-2A, or Alternative 12C-2A would have an adverse impact on the National Register-listed Kingsbury-Doak Farmhouse (Survey ID 235). Of those three alternatives, 12C-2A would place the Illiana Corridor interchange with I-65 farthest to the south. We realize that the Indiana Department of Transportation at the present time has no specific plans to extend the Illiana Corridor (by whatever name or designation) farther to the east than the proposed Illiana/I-65 interchange, but it is our understanding that it might be possible to do so in the future, if the need arose, and that such an extension might commence at that interchange. Accordingly, it appears to us that it might be advantageous to select Alternative 12C-2A, at least with regard to impacts on above-ground properties, because an eastward or northeastward extension of the Illiana Corridor from that interchange would be less likely than the other two to have an adverse impact on the Kingsbury-Doak Farmhouse.

We do not object to advancing for further consideration the alternatives that are recommended in the September 2013 draft of the *Alternatives to be Carried Forward Technical Memorandum*.

If you have questions about issues pertaining to above-ground properties, such as buildings or structures, in Indiana, then please contact John Carr at (317) 233-1949 or jcarr@dnr.IN.gov. Questions about archaeological issues in Indiana should be directed to Dr. Rick Jones at (317) 233-0953 or rjones@dnr.IN.gov. Please address future written correspondence on Illiana Corridor Tier Two to Chad W. Slider, Assistant Director for Environmental Review, Division

of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 402 West Washington Street, Room W274, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204.

Very truly yours,



Mitchell K. Zoll
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

MKZ:JLC:JRJ:jj

emc: Matt Fuller, Federal Highway Administration, Illinois Division
Joyce Newland, Federal Highway Administration, Indiana Division
James A. Earl, II, P.E., Indiana Department of Transportation
John Fortmann, Illinois Department of Transportation
Steven Schilke, P.E., Illiana Project Manager
Katie Kukielka, P.E., IDOT PMC Project Manager
Anne Haaker, Illinois Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Laura Hilden, Indiana Department of Transportation
Patrick Carpenter, Indiana Department of Transportation
Shaun Miller, Indiana Department of Transportation
Anuradha Kumar, Indiana Department of Transportation
Susan Branigin, Indiana Department of Transportation
Matt Coon, Ph.D., Indiana Department of Transportation
Melany Prather, Indiana Department of Transportation
Matt Buffington, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife
Richard Rampone, P.E., Parsons Brinckerhoff
Steve Ott, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Aimee Paquin, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Ryan Duddleson, Cardno JFNew

From: Matt.Fuller@dot.gov [Matt.Fuller@dot.gov]

Sent: Wednesday, October 09, 2013 1:50 PM

To: michelle.allen@dot.gov; Hassan.Dastgir@dot.gov; lou.haasis@dot.gov; Hine, Mike; jearl@indot.in.gov; Kukielka, Katie L.; lhilden@indot.in.gov; KMCMULLEN@indot.IN.gov; Joyce.Newland@dot.gov; Janice.Osadczyk@dot.gov; ramponera@pbworld.com; Schilke, Steven E; Zyznieuski, Walter G

Subject: FW: concurrence on alternatives to be carried forward

From: CLARK METTLER, MARTHA [mailto:MCLARK@idem.IN.gov]

Sent: Wednesday, October 09, 2013 1:50 PM

To: Fuller, Matt (FHWA)

Cc: Allen, Michelle (FHWA); Earl, James; ramponera@pbworld.com; west.norman@epamail.epa.gov; steven.schilke@illinois.gov; paul.m.leffler@usace.army.mil

Subject: concurrence on alternatives to be carried forward

Dear Mr. Fuller:

Thank you for allowing the Indiana Department of Environmental Management the opportunity to review and comment on the *Alternatives to be Carried Forward Technical Memorandum* for the Illiana Corridor dated September 2013. In addition to reviewing this document, IDEM participated in follow-up meetings on September 19, 2013 and September 25, 2013.


Based upon review of the technical memorandum and discussions held in the follow up meetings, IDEM concurs with the alternatives to be carried forward.

IDEM does however, make the following recommendations to improve the process and the final outcome of the project:


Before the publication of the draft environmental impact statement (EIS), please consider improvements to the mapping and the EIS documents themselves. IDEM would like to see tabs for the appendices, all wetlands and stream identified on the maps, and I-65 interchange maps in color with the wetland and streams identified on the maps. The wetlands and streams

should be labeled in accordance with the wetland delineation so the agency can easily cross reference between the map and delineation.

The agency strongly suggests that geotechnical work begin immediately on Section 9, Wetland Complex, B-W37. This area should be given priority over all other sites in Indiana. This a large Houghton Muck unit proposed to be spanned by the corridor. The agency would like an environmental commitment to span this complex at a height great enough to allow sunlight penetration to the wetlands below the transportation corridor.

If you have any questions regarding the content of this email, please contact Jason Randolph, Project Manager, of my staff by phone at 317-233-0467 , or by e-mail at jrandolp@idem.in.gov.

Sincerely,

Martha Clark Mettler
Deputy Assistant Commissioner
Office of Water Quality
Indiana Department of Environmental Management
100 North Senate Avenue
MC 65-40 IGCN 1255
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2251
317-232-8402 

November 21, 2013

Martha Clark Mettler
Deputy Assistant Commissioner
Office of Water Quality
Indiana Department of Environmental Management
100 North Senate Avenue
MC 65-40 IGCN 1255
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2251

Dear Ms. Mettler:

Thank you for your comments on, and concurrence with, the Alternatives to be Carried Forward Technical Memorandum. The responses below follow the order they were presented in your original letter:

Comment: Before the publication of the draft environmental impact statement (EIS), please consider improvements to the mapping and the EIS documents themselves. IDEM would like to see tabs for the appendices, all wetlands and streams identified on the maps, and I-65 interchange maps in color with the wetland and streams identified on the maps. The wetlands and streams should be labeled in accordance with the wetland delineation so the agency can easily cross reference between the map and delineation.


Response: In the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), sharper imaging and larger scale mapping will be provided to better distinguish the alternatives, with appropriate labeling, as discussed at the October 23, 2013 NEPA/404 Merger concurrence meeting. The Illiana Corridor study team will consider your request for indexing the appendices in the print version of the DEIS.

Comment: The agency strongly suggests that geotechnical work begin immediately on Section 9, Wetland Complex, B-W37. This area should be given priority over all other sites in Indiana. This is a large Houghton Muck unit proposed to be spanned by the corridor. The agency would like an environmental commitment to span this complex at a height great enough to allow sunlight penetration to the wetlands below the transportation corridor.

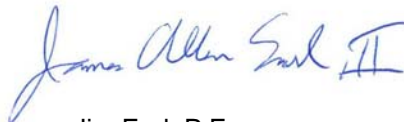
Response: The study team has requested the study's geotechnical manager to schedule the B-W37 wetland complex area as an early activity. Please be advised that the results of the investigation may not be available until approximately one month after drilling.

Thank you for your ongoing assistance with the Illiana Corridor study process. We look forward to continued coordination with you.

Sincerely,



Steve Schilke, P.E.
Consultant Studies Unit Head
Illiana Project Manager



Jim Earl, P.E.
Project Manager
Indiana Department of Transportation



October 21, 2013

Environmental Unit
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Matt Fuller
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3250 Executive Park Drive
Springfield, IL 62563

**Re: Illiana Alternatives to be Carried Forward, Draft September 2013,
Tier 2 Environmental Impact Statement; Concurrence**

Dear Mr. Fuller:

This letter is in response to the "Alternatives to be Carried Forward" Technical Memorandum, Draft, September 2013, for the Tier Two Environmental Impact Statement for the Illiana Corridor.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources reviewed this document in advance of October 23, 2013, NEPA-404 Merger Meeting regarding concurrence of alternatives to be carried forward.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) concurs with the selection of alternatives to be carried forward. Additional comments regarding the document was sent under separate cover, dated October 4, 2013.

Please contact me at (317) 233-4666 if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Matt Buffington
Environmental Supervisor
Division of Fish and Wildlife

cc:

Jim Earl, Indiana Department of Transportation
Steven Schilke, Illinois Department of Transportation
Rick Rampone, Parsons Brinckerhoff

November 21, 2013

Matt Buffington
Environmental Supervisor
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of Fish and Wildlife Environmental Unit
402 W. Washington Street Room W273
Indianapolis, IN 46204

RE: Illiana Corridor Tier Two Alternatives to be Carried Forward, Lake County, Indiana

Dear Mr. Buffington:

Thank you for your comments pertaining to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) review of the Illiana Alternatives to be Carried Forward Technical Memorandum (ACFTM), which were included in your correspondence dated October 4, 2013. We also received your October 21, 2013 correspondence indicating Indiana DNR concurrence with the ACFTM. Finally, we sincerely appreciate your meeting with us on October 22, 2013 to review and discuss the comments outlined in your October 4th correspondence and for your attendance and participation in the NEPA/404 Merger concurrence meeting, on October 23, 2013, for the ACFTM.

Based on our meetings and discussions regarding the ACFTM, the following are formal responses to address the comments, in the order they were presented, provided in your October 4th correspondence:

Comment: Overall, there are a limited number of pre-screened alternatives being carried forward in Indiana, as some level of avoidance and minimization has occurred since the Tier One Working Alignment was reviewed. As long as the document identifies constraints and other reasons for excluding certain areas as potential alternatives, providing some amount of screening is generally acceptable. For instance, the discussion of Section 11 provides a reasonable explanation for the interchange alternative at State Road 55, but lacks sufficient detail regarding why only one alternative was provided for the rest of the section. Additional detail would be beneficial to better understand why the various alternatives in Indiana were selected and other areas were avoided.

Response: In the upcoming Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), additional justification for selecting alternative 11A as a single alternative recommended to be carried forward will be provided, as discussed at both our one-on-one meeting with you held on October 22, 2013 and also at the October 23, 2013 NEPA/404 Merger concurrence meeting.

Comment: Aspects of the document formatting make it difficult to evaluate the alternatives. Some figures include subtle shading differences that are difficult to distinguish from each other (particularly the yellow and orange) and not all the shading is labeled. Figure 4-29 provides the different interchange alternatives at I-65 but the footprints are overlapped so it is difficult to determine the limits of each alternative. Figure 5-1, Sheet 18 is slightly better for this location but not all of the lines for each alternative are labeled. Also, some terms in the document, such as "parclo," are not described. It is presumed parclo is a "partial cloverleaf" but the term should be described with sufficient detail to understand the interchange layout and why such a design was not forwarded for further review.

Response: In the DEIS, sharper imaging and larger scale mapping will be provided that helps distinguish between alternatives, and acronyms and technical terms defined in a glossary, as discussed at the October 23, 2013 NEPA/404 Merger concurrence meeting.

Comment: Blue-spotted salamander: To the greatest extent possible, alternatives should avoid blocks of habitat and areas where state endangered, threatened, and special concern species potentially could exist. Some species, like the blue-spotted salamander, a state species of special concern, have relatively small home ranges and are less able to move to a new location compared to other species that are more mobile, like most bird species.

Blue-spotted salamanders are restricted to the northern quarter of the State. They are most plentiful in moist woodland with sandy soil, but can be found in other types of woods and overgrown pastures. Something to note is that unlike similar species of salamanders, blue-spotted salamanders are often found under cover objects. They breed in small woodland ponds, particularly vernal pools, in late winter/early spring and would be vulnerable if something happened to the pond (i.e. habitat destruction). Egg survival and survival from larvae to juvenile are especially important to this type of salamander. According to "Illinois Amphibians and Reptiles" (Phillips, et al.), they are most plentiful in undisturbed areas and are vulnerable to urban sprawl. In some information by Dr. Bob Brodman, blue-spotted salamanders are no longer found in areas surrounding Jasper-Pulaski Fish & Wildlife Area due to agriculture. Home range size is not known, but they likely do not have a very large home range. They would be most vulnerable during migrations to and from the breeding ponds (adults in spring and newly metamorphosed juveniles in late summer). The Jefferson salamander (a species that hybridizes with the blue-spotted salamander) is known to travel 250-1600 meters away from the breeding ponds. The blue-spotted salamander is smaller than the Jefferson and may not travel as far. Roads occurring between breeding ponds and non-breeding habitat would be problematic, especially during spring migrations when large numbers of individuals could be found on the road at one time, particularly after warm rains.

Response: Through the development of the Illiana Corridor, consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) [16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.] has occurred. Through the Section 7 consultation with the USFWS, federal threatened and endangered species potentially affected by the proposed action were identified. As the proposed project is a major construction activity (50 CFR §402.02) a Biological Assessment (BA) is being prepared. The purpose of the BA is to evaluate the potential effects of the action on listed and proposed species and designated and proposed critical habitat, to determine whether any such species or habitats are likely to be adversely affected by the action.

In Indiana, the project has the potential to impact the black-crowned night heron, Virginia rail, American badger, eastern red bat, northern long-eared bat, green twayblade orchid, blue-spotted salamander, northern leopard frog, and great egret.

Alternative 1 would avoid impacting habitat of many of the Indiana state listed species by avoiding the larger forested area where the blue-spotted salamander was observed and avoiding most of the large wetlands and ponds where the black-crowned night heron, northern leopard frog, and great egret were observed.

Measures to minimize potential impacts to the blue-spotted salamander include avoiding destruction or degradation of vernal ponds and other wetland habitats and potential breeding

areas within or adjacent to moist, sandy-soil forests, the removal of trees from forests, and compaction of soil.

Comment: Wildlife Habitat and Passage: Wildlife passage options should be evaluated at all stream crossings and in locations where the new roadway would bisect existing habitat, such as forests and wetlands. The supplemental "Sustainable Opportunity Areas" information indicated that five (5) wildlife crossings would be proposed in Indiana. However, the Indiana DNR also suggests considering wildlife passage at West Creek, the large wetland complex in Section 9 east of McConnell Ditch, the large wetland complex in Section 10, Spring Run and its tributary, and Griesel Ditch. While the riparian corridors of these additional streams may not be heavily wooded, most streams serve as natural wildlife corridors and wildlife would benefit from passage opportunities at these locations. The wetlands in Sections 9 and 10 are examples of large habitat areas bisected by the proposed road. Wildlife passage, particularly for wetland species, should be evaluated throughout these habitat areas. The blue-spotted salamander was found in the Alternative 10A alignment and could be present throughout the wetland and forested areas of Section 10. Therefore, passage that considers this species as well as others should be considered. Without passage opportunities, some species will become isolated as they will not cross roadways. For other species that attempt to cross over the interstate, this could lead to collisions, wildlife mortality, and loss of life or property.

Wildlife passage typically means providing an area of natural ground that is free riprap or similar material, with enough height and width to pass all likely wildlife species. Openings with minimum dimensions of 8' tall by 24' wide with unsubmerged dry land without riprap or other angular bank stabilization materials are ideal for passing a wide range of wildlife species. Some species, such as salamanders, often prefer somewhat moist conditions while others prefer mostly dry land. When planning fish and wildlife passage structures, bridges are generally better than culverts and bottomless culverts are better than box or pipe culverts. Wide culverts are better than narrow culverts, and culverts with shorter through lengths are better than culverts with longer through lengths. If box or pipe culverts are used in a stream, the bottoms should be buried a minimum of 6" (or 20% of the culvert height/pipe diameter, whichever is greater up to a maximum of 2') below the stream bed elevation. Stream crossings should: span the entire channel width; maintain the natural stream substrate within the structure; and have stream depth and water velocities during low-flow conditions that are approximate to those in the natural stream channel.

Enhancing areas adjacent to the new highway that are disturbed due to construction should be pursued as a means to address BMPs, but are generally not preferred mitigation opportunities. Any mitigation efforts or installation of riparian buffers should use locally native species (native to the northern third of Indiana).

Response: We acknowledge your comments regarding the number, location and design of wildlife crossings in Indiana, and further discussed these items with you at both our one-on-one meeting on October 22, 2013 and the October 23, 2013 NEPA/404 Merger concurrence meeting. As we indicated, we anticipate that determining the locations of, and design of, wildlife crossings will be a continuing coordination effort between Indiana DNR, INDOT, FHWA, and the federal resource agencies and will be further refined in the preferred alternative and documented in the Tier Two Final EIS and Record of Decision.

Comment: Alternatives Analysis: Alternative 9B appears to best avoid wetland and forest habitat, with the difference of impact between 9A and 9B being roughly 7 acres total.

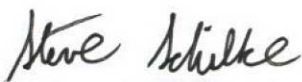
Alternative 10B appears to better avoid and minimize impacts upon forests and wetlands compared to Alternative 10A. However, both Section 10 alternatives are likely to impact potential blue-spotted salamander habitat. Just because the species was only found in Alternative 10A does not mean that it does not exist in Alternative 10B as this entire area is a complex of wetland and forested habitats that could serve as salamander habitat. Since Alternative 10B should have fewer impacts to potential habitat, it should result in fewer impacts to the salamander. During construction, it is important to take specific measures to avoid impacts to the species, such as isolating work areas with trenched-in silt fencing and avoiding ground disturbance during hibernation periods. The final design should allow for ease of movement for the salamander throughout all of the remaining habitat. Because the blue-spotted salamander mainly uses woodland vernal pools for spawning, protection of these vernal pools is important for the continued presence of the species at this location. Many of these pools dry up at certain times of the year, so numerous site visits may be necessary to identify them.

Like Sections 1, 5, and 7, only one alternative was provided for Section 11. Appendix A provides some justification for the single Section 11 alternative, but additional information would be beneficial. The document compares the impacts of this single alternative to the impacts under the Tier One Working Alignment. However, Page 5 of the Introduction explains how the environmental data used in Tier Two is significantly more refined than in Tier One. Therefore, making comparisons between the two sets of data can be quite misleading and the Tier One working alignment should be considered more as a general reference point and not a source of comparison between possible alternatives. Alternative 12C-2A provides the greatest avoidance of the highest quality habitats near the I-65 interchange, particularly forests. However, it is difficult to determine the footprint of each interchange alternative based on the figures provided, and therefore, difficult to evaluate impacts and avoidance.

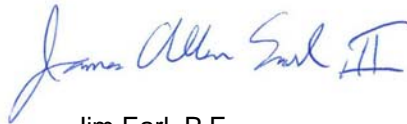
Response: Please refer to our responses above regarding justification of the single alternative for Section 11 and the improvement of graphics going forward in the Tier Two DEIS. We agree with your statement that the impacts of the Tier One working alignment are not directly comparable with the impacts determined in the more detailed alternative alignments in the ACFTM, and instead provide more of a general reference point, and have tried to make that distinction in our presentations.

Thank you for your ongoing assistance and input regarding the Illiana Corridor study process. We look forward to continued coordination with the Indiana DNR.

Sincerely,



Steve Schilke, P.E.
Consultant Studies Unit Head
Illiana Project Manager



Jim Earl, P.E.
Project Manager
Indiana Department of Transportation

-----Original Message-----

From: Hall, Soren G LRC [<mailto:Soren.G.Hall@usace.army.mil>]

Sent: Monday, October 21, 2013 2:00 PM

To: Fuller, Matt (FHWA)

Subject: RE: meeting this Wednesday for Illiana range of alternatives concurrence - can you make it?
(UNCLASSIFIED)

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

Caveats: NONE

Matt,

I completed my review of the alternatives memo and I had a couple comments that weren't provided at our earlier meeting:

1. The determination of which roads are open and closed was completed by performing an economic analysis. There was no alternatives analysis as was done with the alignments and interchanges, at least not in what was provided. There were a few areas that I identified where a less impacting alternative (in terms of wetland or stream impacts) may be available. Below is a list of the areas where impacts may occur due to providing access:

- Martin Long Road: keeping it open results in an additional 0.9 acres of wetland impact. The alternatives, Symerton of Commercial Street, appear to involve little or no impact.

R-051

- 128th Avenue: may result in impacts under one of the alternatives. There are adjacent alternatives.
- Kedzie Avenue: may result in impact to a stream whereas Western Ave. would not.
- Yates Ave: results in impacts to wetland 13, Klemme would not.
- White Oak Ave: may result in impacts to wetlands, adjacent alternatives present.
- Holtz: may result in impacts, Marshall would not.
- Frontage roads are being used in some areas which may result in impacts, but these areas are not specifically shown. Modifying access locations could alter the frontage road locations and resulting impacts.

2. Section 6 has two alternatives with significantly differing wetland impacts. Alternative 6B has between 4 and 7 acres more wetland impact, depending on where you look in the document. The Corps would likely not concur if alternative 6B were chosen as the preferred based on the information provided due to the increased wetland impacts.

Thanks,
Soren

Soren Hall
USACE - Regulatory
Desk: 312-846-5532

-----Original Message-----

From: Matt.Fuller@dot.gov [<mailto:Matt.Fuller@dot.gov>]

Sent: Monday, October 21, 2013 1:08 PM

To: pelloso.elizabeth@epa.gov; westlake.kenneth@epa.gov; West.Norman@epamail.epa.gov; Shawn_Cirton@fws.gov; Hall, Soren G LRC

Subject: [EXTERNAL] meeting this Wednesday for Illiana range of alternatives concurrence - can you make it?

Good afternoon everyone - I wanted to touch base with each of you today to make sure you can still participate in the concurrence point discussion for Illiana, which was re-scheduled from October 9 to October 23, due to the temporary government shutdown. I realize you all have a lot to catch up with being out for a few weeks, so please let me know if this Wednesday isn't possible given the unusual circumstances October brought upon us all. I sent out an appointment earlier this month for Wednesday's meeting, so you each should have received a notice around October 8.

We are planning to host the meeting using teleconference and webinar, unless we can find a space to get together. I plan to participate from the Springfield office.

Please let me know how Wednesday looks. Thanks.

Matt

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Caveats: NONE

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you have received this message in error, or you are not an authorized recipient, please notify the sender immediately by replying to this message, delete this message and all copies from your e-mail system and destroy any printed copies.

From: Schilke, Steven E

Sent: Friday, December 20, 2013 2:08 PM

To: 'Soren.G.Hall@usace.army.mil'

Cc: Fuller, Matt; Kukielka, Katie L.

Subject: FW: Illiana Corridor - Draft Response to USACE Comments on the ACFTM

Soren,

Reference is made to your October 21, 2013 e-mail comments sent to Matt Fuller on the Illiana Corridor Tier Two Alternatives to be Carried Forward Technical Memorandum (ACFTM). A copy of those comments are included as an attachment to this e-mail.

Based on information presented during our October 23, 2013 NEPA/404 Merger Team meeting, as well as during our subsequent discussions regarding the current alternatives, I believe we have addressed your comments on the roadway connectivity plan and Alternative 6B. Formal responses to your comments are included below:

Roadway Connectivity Plan

In your 10/21/13 e-mail, you expressed concern that the alternatives analysis was only performed for the alignments and interchanges, and was not performed when developing the roadway connectivity plan. The development of the roadway connectivity plan required a balance of assessing all impacts, including access impacts to the local communities. The roadway connectivity was extensively coordinated with school districts, emergency service providers, the Will County Farm Bureau and the Lake County Farm Bureau, as well as local residents and government officials. The roadway connectivity plan was highly coordinated to provide reasonable access to properties and areas that would otherwise be severed by the project. The selection process for these locations will be documented in the upcoming Tier Two Draft EIS.

You also cited several locations where the decision to keep a road open may result in higher environmental impacts than if the road were to remain closed. I have provided a summary below which addresses the locations that you listed in your e-mail:

- Martin Long Road has been re-evaluated due to a number of public comments and is now proposed to be closed, with Symerton Road now proposed to be kept open. This addresses

your comment that keeping Martin Long Road open over Symerton Road or Commercial Street would result in higher wetland impacts.

- The determination to keep 128th Avenue, Kedzie Avenue, Yates Avenue, White Oak Avenue, and Holtz Road open was the result of extensive stakeholder coordination as noted above. The selection process for these locations will be documented in the upcoming Tier Two Draft EIS.
- Frontage road locations have been suggested along the Illiana Corridor to address issues of accessing multiple properties that would otherwise be landlocked (as in the case of the Wilton Center Road to 128th Avenue frontage road) or to provide connectivity from a closed road to an open road. The location of these frontage roads were also the result of extensive stakeholder coordination, and the selection process for these locations will be documented in the upcoming Tier Two Draft EIS. The number and locations of frontage roads presented in the Draft EIS are not final; these roads would need to be publicly owned and maintained, and the State DOTs need to coordinate further with the local public entities to determine who would have jurisdictional rights over each road. The inclusion of potential frontage roads in the upcoming Draft EIS is a conservative effort to ensure that any potential impacts associated with these roads are reported in the document.

Alternative 6A vs. Alternative 6B

In your e-mail comments, you also discussed the wetland impacts associated with Alternative 6A and Alternative 6B. You expressed concern over the quantity of wetland impacts associated with Alternative 6B.

The alternatives development for the Draft EIS is an iterative process. Alternatives are continually refined as new information becomes available to minimize impacts. As a result of continued alternatives development, the overall impacts for Alternative 6B, including the wetland impacts, have been reduced. The updated impacts will be documented in the upcoming Draft EIS.

Thank you for your ongoing assistance and input regarding the Illiana Corridor study process. We look forward to continued coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology • 402 W. Washington Street, W274 • Indianapolis, IN 46204-2739
Phone 317-232-1646 • Fax 317-232-0693 • dhpa@dnr.IN.gov

Michael R. Pence, Governor
Cameron F. Clark, Director



October 22, 2013

Matt Fuller
Environmental Programs Engineer
Illinois Division Office
Federal Highway Administration
3250 Executive Park Drive
Springfield, Illinois 62563

Federal Agency: Federal Highway Administration ("FHWA")

Re: Clarification of the Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer's October 4, 2013, comment letter on the *Alternatives to be Carried Forward Technical Memorandum, Illiana Corridor Tier Two Environmental Impact Statement* (September 2013 draft) (INDOT Des. No. 1006456; DHPA No. 11913)

Dear Mr. Fuller:

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the staff of the Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer ("Indiana SHPO") has examined the aforementioned *Alternatives to be Carried Forward Technical Memorandum, Illiana Corridor Tier Two Environmental Impact Statement* (September 2013 draft; "Draft ATBCFTM"), which we received on September 6, 2013, for Tier Two of the Illiana Corridor in Lake County, Indiana, and in Kankakee and Will counties, Illinois. Our concurrence has been requested prior to the Alternatives to be Carried Forward concurrence meeting, which has been rescheduled to October 23, 2013.

It has come to our attention that there are a couple of statements in our October 4 letter on this subject that are in need of clarification, and, consequently, we are issuing this letter, parts of which are repeated from our October 4 letter.

We will limit our comments here to issues in Indiana, in deference to the Illinois State Historic Preservation Officer, as well as to issues pertaining to cultural resources (archaeological and above-ground), in deference to the other Indiana state resource agencies that are participating in this review.

For future reference, it would be helpful if a formal document like the Draft ATBCFTM were accompanied by a cover letter or memorandum, in which a specific question were posed or a specific request for comments were made. In this instance, we understand, as a result of previous e-mail messages and telephone conversations, that the specific request being made of us is that we concur that all of the alternatives proposed in the *Draft ATBCFTM* should be analyzed further.

Our first point of clarification is that we intended to comment in our October 4 letter—and likewise are commenting here—only on the *Draft ATBCFTM*. Our October 4 letter had inadvertently mentioned the "DRAFT Purpose and Need Statement." We previously had concurred with that document in our April 3, 2013, letter, and we did not intend to revisit that subject in our October 4 letter.

With respect to our second point of clarification, in our October 4 letter, we had said that "[w]e do not object to advancing for further consideration the alternatives that are recommended in the September 2013 draft of the *Alternatives to be Carried Forward Technical Memorandum*." We wish to state that we concur that we believe it is appropriate to go forward with further analysis of all of the alternatives proposed in the *Draft ATBCFTM*. We do not have any additional alternatives to propose, based on what we currently know. We also wish to qualify our concurrence, however, by adding

that one should not assume that we necessarily think that all of those proposed alternatives would have equal impacts on significant cultural resources. We will elaborate below.

In light of the information provided to date, it does not appear likely that either Alternative 9A or Alternative 9B would have an adverse impact on the Cutler Farm (Survey ID 72), which is considered to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Consequently, at this time, we do not have a preference between those two alternatives, with respect to above-ground historic properties.

It also does not appear likely at this time that either Alternative 12A-1, Alternative 12B-2A, or Alternative 12C-2A would have an adverse impact on the National Register-listed Kingsbury-Doak Farmhouse (Survey ID 235). Of those three alternatives, 12C-2A would place the Illiana Corridor interchange with I-65 farthest to the south. We realize that the Indiana Department of Transportation at the present time has no specific plans to extend the proposed Illiana Corridor (by whatever name or route designation) farther to the east than Illiana Corridor/I-65 interchange. It is our understanding, however, that it might be possible to extend the Illiana Corridor in the future, if the need arose, and that such an extension might commence either at that interchange or at some other point along I-65. Accordingly, it seems to us that it might be advantageous, with regard only to impacts on significant above-ground properties, to select Alternative 12C-2A, because an eastward or northeastward extension of the Illiana Corridor from the interchange proposed in Alternative 12C-2A would seem to be less likely than the other two alternatives to have a direct or indirect adverse impact on the Kingsbury-Doak Farmhouse.

As you are aware, the identification and evaluation of archaeological resources is currently underway. Consequently, we are less able to comment on possible impacts to significant archaeological resources at this time than we are with regard to significant above-ground resources.

If you have questions about issues pertaining to above-ground properties, such as buildings or structures, in Indiana, then please contact John Carr at (317) 233-1949 or jcarr@dnr.IN.gov. Questions about archaeological issues in Indiana should be directed to Dr. Rick Jones at (317) 233-0953 or rjones@dnr.IN.gov. Please address future written correspondence on Illiana Corridor Tier Two to Chad W. Slider, Assistant Director for Environmental Review, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 402 West Washington Street, Room W274, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204.

Very truly yours,



Mitchell K. Zoll
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

MKZ:JLC:JRJ:jj

emc: Matt Fuller, Federal Highway Administration, Illinois Division
Joyce Newland, Federal Highway Administration, Indiana Division
James A. Earl, II, P.E., Indiana Department of Transportation
John Fortmann, Illinois Department of Transportation
Steven Schilke, P.E., Illiana Project Manager
Katie Kukielka, P.E., IDOT PMC Project Manager
Anne Haaker, Illinois Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Laura Hilden, Indiana Department of Transportation
Patrick Carpenter, Indiana Department of Transportation
Mary Kennedy, Indiana Department of Transportation
Shaun Miller, Indiana Department of Transportation
Anuradha Kumar, Indiana Department of Transportation
Susan Branigin, Indiana Department of Transportation
Matt Coon, Ph.D., Indiana Department of Transportation
Melany Prather, Indiana Department of Transportation
Richard Rampone, P.E., Parsons Brinckerhoff
Steve Ott, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Aimee Paquin, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Ryan Duddleson, Cardno JFNew
Chris Smith, Indiana Department of Natural Resources

John Davis, Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Matt Buffington, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife
Dr. Rick Jones, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology
John Carr, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology



ILLIANA CORRIDOR
PARTNERING FOR PROGRESS

**NEPA/404 Merger
Team Meeting**
October 23, 2013

Tier Two






Presentation Agenda

- Public Coordination and comments on ACFTM
- Alternatives to be Carried Forward Update
- Request for Concurrence
- Next Steps
- Other Items

Tier Two








Public Coordination and Comments on ACFTM

Tier Two






Public Coordination



Tier Two

- Oct. 9 – Residents of Foxtail Commons
 - General questions about alternatives and the land acquisition process
- Oct. 11- Florence Twp. and Village of Symerton
 - Discussions about road connectivity, IL-53 alternatives and other issues
- Oct. 17 – CMAP Policy Committee
 - Presentations, public comment and vote for inclusion in CMAP GO TO 2040 fiscally constrained plan
- Oct. 22 – Indiana DNR coordination
 - Wildlife crossing coordination, blue-spotted salamander, general alternatives discussion



ACFTM Comments



- **City of Joliet**
 - Prefers a connection at IL 53
- **Midewin**
 - Still prefers a connection south of Wilmington
 - Would like to study removal of the I-55 New River Road connection
 - Alternatives from Sections 1-4 provide an adequate basis for evaluation
 - Emphasis on mitigation in Tier Two, given the alternatives
 - Traffic, noise, light, habitat, connectivity, prescribed burning, Section 106



5

ACFTM Comments



- **ELPC/Openlands/Sierra Club**
 - Supports CMAP staff recommendation for not including in GO TO 2040 fiscally constrained plan
 - Questions on traffic modeling numbers at IL-53 and Illiana interchange
 - Effects on natural resources; bird rookery at Luther's Island (Kankakee River)
 - Request to study compounded effects to resources on a much larger scale



6



Alternatives to be Carried Forward Update

Tier Two




September 25, 2013 Comments and Coordination

Overall Comment

- Agencies questioned how their comments will be incorporated in the FEIS under MAP-21
 - FHWA intent is to have a process with appropriate coordination to ensure DEIS comments are addressed

September 25, 2013 Comments and Coordination

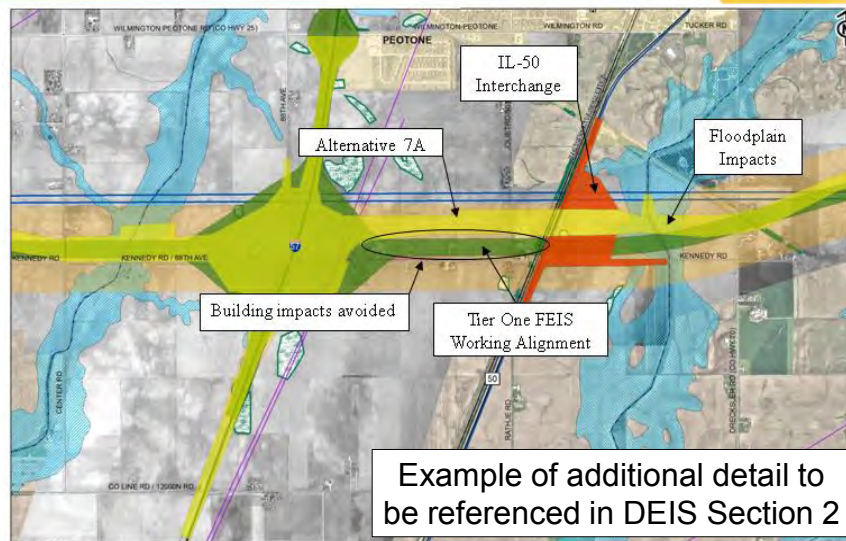


USEPA

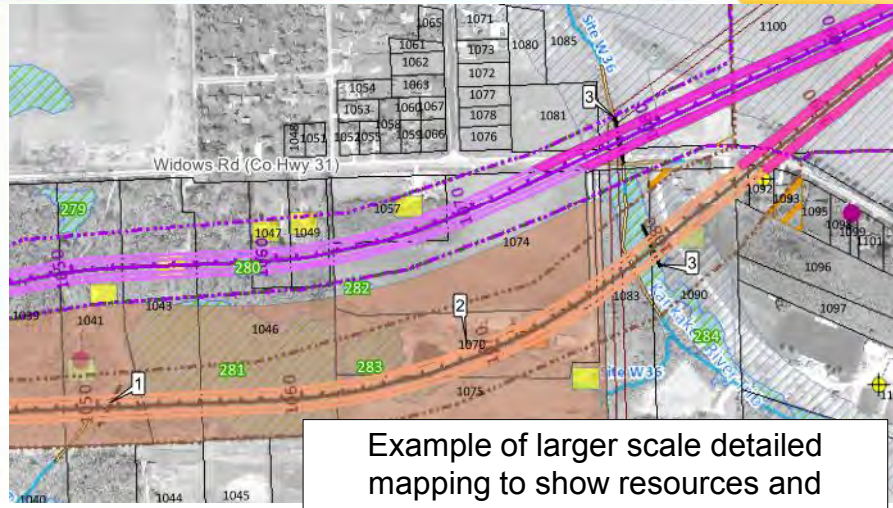
- Requested GIS database for verification of impacts; pointed out discrepancies in map book tables provided in ACFTM
 - GIS info provided
- Asked about the timetable for identifying a preferred alternative
 - May identify in the DEIS November 2013; otherwise, would identify following public comment period
- Requested better graphics to clearly distinguish between alternatives
 - See examples



September 25, 2013 Comments and Coordination



September 25, 2013 Comments and Coordination



September 25, 2013 Comments and Coordination



USEPA (continued)

- Requested details on bridge lengths, wildlife connectivity and bicycle/pedestrian accommodations
 - Will be identified in the DEIS



September 25, 2013 Comments and Coordination



USACE



- (with USEPA) Requested identification of opportunities for further impact avoidance
 - Example – 4 acre wetland in middle of Lorenzo Rd. interchange; **study team looking into ways to do this within the context of the DEIS**
- Impact avoidance potential where multiple alternatives exist
 - Which alternative is least impacting or has highest potential for impact avoidance?
 - **There are several considerations**



1.3

September 25, 2013 Comments and Coordination



USACE (continued)



- Alternatives 3B and 3F are preferred over Alternative 3A from a resource protection standpoint
- Martin Long Road: higher wetland impact as compared to other alternatives
 - Access changed to Symerton Road
- 128th Avenue: may result in impacts under one of the alternatives; adjacent alternatives available
- Kedzie Avenue: may result in impact to a stream; Western Avenue would not



1.4

September 25, 2013 Comments and Coordination



USACE (continued)

- Yates Avenue: results in wetland impacts; Klemme Road would not
- White Oak Ave: may result in impacts to wetlands; adjacent alternatives available
- Holtz Road: may result in impacts; Marshall Street would not
- Modifying frontage road access could have an effect on resulting impacts
- Alternative 6A has less wetland impacts than Alternative 6B and is preferred from a resource protection standpoint



1.5

September 25, 2013 Comments and Coordination



Response to USACE Road Connectivity Comments

- Coordination of local access is a careful balance of economic justification with stakeholder input
- Coordination with:
 - Emergency services
 - School districts
 - Township, Municipal and County officials
 - IL and IN Farm Bureaus
 - Landowners
- After initial priorities established, look for ways to minimize impacts while maintaining connectivity plan



1.6

September 25, 2013 Comments and Coordination



Response to USACE Alternative 6B Comments

- Alternative 6B was largely the result of stakeholder coordination
- February property owner meetings and Will County Farm Bureau input to reduce property severances and maintain integrity of farm operations
- No high quality FQI >20 wetlands impacted
- Potential to further reduce wetland impacts along 6B



1.7

September 25, 2013 Comments and Coordination



USDOI-FWS

- Discussion about stormwater BMPs
 - Study team is proposing capture of first 0.75"
 - Elgin O'Hare project used 1.25"
 - 0.75" reflects Will County ordinance, 1.25" reflects DuPage County ordinance
- Discussion about lawsuit, CMAP coordination issues
 - IDOT and INDOT have intervened in lawsuit
 - Not currently authorized to comment



1.8

September 25, 2013 Comments and Coordination



USDA-FS Midewin

- Questioned how T&E impacts are shown in ACFTM
 - August 6 presentation showed potential habitat in area
 - ACFTM shows where specific species are present, and provides additional description

19



September 25, 2013 Comments and Coordination



IDEM

- Alt 10B has lower forest AND wetland impacts than Alt 10A in ACFTM
 - Study team concurs; this represents a change in footprint and screening; 10B wetland impact was 0.9 ac higher than 10A in August 6 presentation, 1.1 ac lower in ACFTM
- Prefers Alt 10B and 12C-2A in comparison to other Alts
- Suggested further changes to 10B to avoid business impacts
 - Study team is investigating
- Suggested bridges above wetlands be of adequate height to allow sunlight penetration
 - Study team is investigating

20



September 25, 2013 Comments and Coordination



IDEM (continued)

- Requested additional soil boring data when available; prioritize Section 9, Wetland Complex, B-W37 which will be bridged by the Illiana
- Suggested 3 locations as candidates for wildlife crossings
 - To be discussed with IN DNR comment
- Further discussion of wetland BMPs and how they should function and not impact the wetland itself
- Further discussion of drainage channels created where defined channels are not present today
- Suggested improvements to graphics and organization of the EIS
- October 9, 2013 concurrence email



21

September 25, 2013 Comments and Coordination



Indiana DNR

- (with IDEM) inquired where study was in design process and % complete design when handed to P3 developer
 - 15% approximate design level for P3 bid
- Questioned how the P3 developer will be accountable to resource protection
 - P3 must follow all permit conditions
- Recommended 50' buffer width both sides of streams
 - Study team is investigating
- Recommended general locations for tree replacement
 - Study team is investigating



22

September 25, 2013 Comments and Coordination



Indiana DNR (continued)

- Comment on graphics quality in ACFTM
 - See earlier USEPA response
- Discussion on blue spotted salamander avoidance
- Suggested additional wildlife crossing locations
 - Discuss prioritization of crossings
- Commentary on alternatives, favoring 9B, 10B, and 12C-2A. Discussion on selection of Alt 11A as single alternative in that section
 - Constraints led to selection of single alternative as most reasonable
- October 21, 2013 concurrence letter



23

Sustainable Opportunity Areas



Potential Opportunities for Wildlife Crossing Locations

- Illinois
 - Kankakee River
 - Unnamed Tributary of the Kankakee River
 - Forked Creek
 - South Branch Forked Creek
 - Black Walnut Creek
 - Pike Creek
- Indiana
 - Unnamed Tributary of West Creek #2
 - McConnell Ditch
 - Unnamed Tributary of McConnell Ditch
 - Cedar Creek
 - Wetland b-w31-pem (Tributary to Cedar Creek)
 - West Creek*
 - Wetland b-w37 Complex in Section 9 east of McConnell Ditch*
 - Wetland b-w31 Complex in Section 10*
 - Spring Run*
 - Spring Run tributary*
 - Griesel Ditch*



*additional potential locations suggested subsequent to the 9-25-13 briefing

24

September 25, 2013 Comments and Coordination



Indiana SHPO

- Four below-ground properties warrant further investigation
- Two listed or eligible above-ground properties; none w/adverse effect
- No preference on Section 9A/9B; recognize advantages to Alternative 12C-2A
- Concurrence with range of alternatives carried forward in ACFTM

25



September 25, 2013 Comments and Coordination



Illinois SHPO

- Approximately 10 below-ground properties warrant further investigation
- 13 listed or eligible above-ground properties
 - consultation with SHPO ongoing
- Info provided to SHPO on two additional properties

26



September 25, 2013 Comments and Coordination



IL Dept. of Agriculture

- Requested how the study coordinated with Will County Farm Bureau
- Coordination has primarily been with drainage, farm accessibility, and road closure issues
 - Request to have local tiling installers perform or oversee the work

27



Biological Assessment for Section 7 Consultation



- Description of species/habitat
- Environmental Baseline
- Effects of the Action
- Determination of the Effect

– Hine's Emerald Dragonfly	– Leafy Prairie Clover
– Eastern Massasauga	– Mead's Milkweed
– Sheepnose mussel	– Erygnium Stem Borer
– Snuffbox mussel	– Indiana Bat
– Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid	– Northern Long-Eared Bat
– Lakeside Daisy	– Karner Blue Butterfly
	– Pitcher's Thistle

28



Context Sensitive Treatment at 4(f) Resources

Tier Two



- Alt US 66 treatment

- Wauponsee Glacial Trail relocation



29



Request for Concurrence

Tier Two



Request for Concurrence

Tier Two



- Alternatives to be Carried Forward request for concurrence - discussion

34



Next Steps

Tier Two



Tier Two Stakeholder Outreach



33

Next Steps

- Tier Two Draft EIS – November 2013 tentative
- Tier Two Public Hearing – December 2013 tentative
- NIRPC Coordination
 - Plan Amendment Public Hearings Nov. 2013
 - Full Commission adoption meeting Dec. 12, 2013



34

Next Steps

- NEPA/404 Preferred Alternative coordination - early 2014
- Final EIS and ROD - Spring 2014
 - May be combined “single document” as in Tier One



3.5

Alternatives in DEIS

- A small number of representative mainline alternatives spanning the entire length of corridor
- Assembled from sectional alternatives
- DEIS may identify a preferred alternative



MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET

Date: October 23, 2013

Location: Parsons Brinckerhoff Office - Indianapolis

Purpose: NEPA Concurrence Request - Alternatives to be Carried Forward

Name	Representing	Email Address
1. <u>Rick Rampone</u>	<u>Parsons Brinckerhoff</u>	<u>rampone@pbworld.com</u>
2. <u>Joyce Newland</u>	<u>FWA - IN DIV</u>	<u>joyce.newland@dot.gov</u>
3. <u>Matt Buffington</u>	<u>IDNR - Fish & Wildlife</u>	<u>mbuffington@dnr.in.gov</u>
4. <u>Laura Hilden</u>	<u>IN DOT</u>	<u>lhilden@indot.in.gov</u>
5. <u>Ken McMullen</u>	<u>IN DOT</u>	<u>KMcMullen@indot.in.gov</u>
6. <u>Paul Mykytka</u>	<u>Parsons Brinckerhoff</u>	<u>mykytka@pbworld.com</u>
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Illiana Corridor Phase I Study

Meeting Summary NEPA/404 Informational Meeting

Date: October 23, 2013

Time: 9:00 AM CDT

Location: Conference Call

A meeting was held by web conference / call to provide updates and responses to questions and issues raised during the previous NEPA/404 Illiana Corridor web conference / call on September 25, 2013, and to request concurrence with the range of alternatives to be carried forward for detailed study in the Tier Two DEIS. Attendees on the call from Parsons Brinckerhoff's Indianapolis office signed an attendance sheet; others identified themselves on the call.

R. Powell, PB, gave a Power Point presentation that addressed responses to the questions and issues raised in the previous NEPA/404 Merger meeting of September 25, recent public coordination activities, and next steps in the process. During, and following the presentation, the following discussions took place.

- 1) W. Spang (Midewin) concurred with the characterization of Midewin's ACFTM letter, and stated that these concerns were not new and were ongoing.
- 2) M. Fuller (FHWA) re-stated that the intent was to have the same approach as Tier One, where resource agencies would have input following the DEIS comment period to ensure their concerns were addressed under the new MAP-21 policies.
- 3) K. Westlake (FHWA) stated that the graphics shown in the presentation were much clearer than those commented on by N. West as needing improvement.
- 4) S. Hall (USACE) discussed a previous comment regarding the 4 acres of wetland at Lorenzo Road previously shown as an impact. S. Ott S. Hall
- 5) S. Cirton (FWS-IL) stated that he would continue to ask for a higher storm water capture rate than the 0.75 inch previously proposed by the Illiana study team, stating his desire for the higher 1.25 inch storm water capture used on the Elgin O'Hare project.. K. Westlake stated they would like to see the project err on the side of more capture to accommodate the other growth that may follow the project. E. Pelloso stated the importance of implementing requirements across the project limits.
- 6) M. Buffington (IN DNR) stated that not everything in the resource agencies' purview is discussed in the EIS process, and he has concerns on how the P3 developer will be held accountable. There needs to be another level of commitment. W. Zyznieuski stated that the project commitments made in the EIS would be enforced by the DOT's as well as the P3 developer needing to meet any permit conditions. There was an extensive discussion of BMPs including wildlife crossings that followed. E. Pelloso indicated that there was an imbalance in crossing opportunities between IL and IN (IN had more, due to additional requests from IN state resource agencies input. K. Westlake asked the study team the level of commitment envisioned. With the P3 development, he suggested commitments

Illiana Corridor Phase I Study

need to be taken up now. S. Schilke indicated there will be change between the DEIS and FEIS, and that public comment on the DEIS would help determine the project commitments, including wildlife crossing number and location.

- 7) E. Leonard inquired on who would maintain opportunity areas if they are outside the corridor. The study continues to collect commentary and foresees getting more specific as part of the preferred alternative concurrence. If all potential opportunities are included in the DEIS, the study may raise expectations unrealistically.
- 8) S. Cirton stated that the FWS typically provides commentary on the DEIS in letter form. If there is a combined FEIS/ROD as in Tier One, it is more important to identify the commitments up front.
- 9) E. Pelloso asked if we had coordinated with Forest Preserve District of Will County (FPDWC), and had they provided additional input on wildlife crossings and BMP's. S. Schilke responded that the IL opportunity areas included the major crossings of FPDWC's concern, but that the study would continue to coordinate with them. E. Pelloso indicated that she had additional candidates.
- 10) K. Westlake suggested the Illiana study look at providing wildlife connectivity in Medewin (possibly across IL-53 north of the project) as a potential mitigation measure for cumulative impacts. S. Schilke stated the mitigation may hinge on which IL-53 interchange option is chosen, since some options actually reduce projected traffic impacts from the No-Action baseline.
- 11) K. Westlake asked if USEPA could receive a copy of the Biological Assessment (BA) concurrently with FWS. S. Cirton did not object with their receiving a copy given its draft status, and requested a copy also be provided to E. McCloskey of the FWS Chesterton, IN office.
- 12) Matt Fuller polled the group as to their concurrence. K. Westlake concurred on behalf of USEPA, and stated a follow up letter would be provided to reiterate some points that were made during the meeting. S. Hall concurred on behalf of USACE. S. Cirton concurred on behalf of FWS-Barrington IL, but indicated that he would need to coordinate with E. McCloskey to get her input on behalf of FWS-Chesterton, IN. S. Hamer concurred on behalf of IL DNR. T. Savko concurred on behalf of IDOA. XX concurred on behalf of IEPA. Three IN agencies had sent prior written concurrences – IN DNR, IDEM, and IN DNR (SHPO). No position was stated by IHPA.
- 13) K. Westlake and E. Pelloso requested a 60 day comment period given the preliminary project schedule of issuing the DEIS at end of November, holding public hearings in mid December, and tentative close of comment period in mid-January. They stated the project would buy some goodwill by allowing extra time to prepare comments in consideration of holidays in December and January.

The meeting concluded at approximately 10:30 AM CDT/11:30 AM EDT.

Attendees:

See attached (sign in from Indianapolis who attended in person)

Remote Attendees:

Matt Fuller – FHWA
Katie Kukielka – AECOM
Steve Schilke – IDOT



Illiana Corridor Phase I Study

Walt Zyznieuski – IDOT BDE
Rick Powell – Parsons Brinckerhoff
Dave McGibbon - Parsons Brinckerhoff
Melissa McGhee - Parsons Brinckerhoff
Steve Ott - Parsons Brinckerhoff
Ed Leonard - Parsons Brinckerhoff
Liz Pelloso – USEPA
Ken Westlake – USEPA
Soren Hall – USACE
Shawn Cirton – FWS
Terry Savko – IDOA
Bob Hommes – Midewin FS-USDA
Wade Spang – Midewin FS-USDA
M. Matkovic – CBBEL
? – IEPA
Others?